

SPECIAL BUMPER CHRISTMAS ISSUE

**BUMPER
148** ISSUE

PLAYSTATION PRO




ISSUE 15 CHRISTMAS 1997 £2.95

300

**GAMES REVIEWED
& RATED INSIDE!**

**FINAL FANTASY VII
BROKEN SWORD 2
ACTUA SOCCER 2
GRAND THEFT AUTO
C&C: RED ALERT**

A large, purple, horned creature with red eyes and a yellow mouth, resembling the Jersey Devil, is shown from the chest up. It is holding a large, rectangular, reddish-brown sign with both hands. The sign has the words "JERSEY DEVIL" in large, bold, black letters, and "HORNY AS HELL?" in smaller, bold, black letters below it. The background is a dark, textured blue.

**JERSEY
DEVIL
HORNY AS HELL?**

CRASH BANDICOOT 2 • COLONY WARS • GRAN TURISMO • SF EX PLUS ALPHA

PLAYSTATION PRO
ISSUE 15
CHRISTMAS 1997

JERSEY DEVIL

TOMB RAIDER 2

FINAL FANTASY VII

TIME CRISIS

C&C: RED ALERT

HAPPY CHRISTMAS!



AFTER NEARLY TWO



STARRING
DAN WEI
[KNOWN AS EVIL COMES]

MANKIND HAS FI

"Dynasty Warriors is a stunning looking game... one of the classiest fighting games on the cards."

PLAYSTATION PLUS

"Dynasty Warriors is an excellent all round performer"

8/10

OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

"...impressive in all areas. Slick, face-smashingly enjoyable and a welcome addition to the genre... Give it a try... a damn fine scrapper"

PLAYSTATION POWER



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FINALLY LEARNED TO KICK, PUNCH AND MAIM... PROPERLY.

三國無双
DYNASTY WARRIORS
DEFY THE DRAGON

ocean



KOEI

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06 - News

Show off to your mates by telling them all the latest PlayStation gossip. You can even win rare Final Fantasy VII merchandise!

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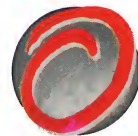
We have a whole host of Croc goodies to give away including undies, jackets, T-shirts and games



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REVIEWED Final Fantasy VII

Look it's wonderful. Do you need a review? Do you 'eck! **20**



Cover Story JERSEY DEVIL

Having fought off competition from all the other major software houses, Ocean secured the rights to a stunning platform game from the other side of the Atlantic. We, as usual, get the exclusive review of something we think you're going to love



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Basically, as above! With the addition of a bland sounding commentator. Thanks a lot EA!

40 - Crash Bandicoot 2

The platform event of the year. *Crash 2* returns with a bang and it truly is better than ever

44 - TOCA Touring Car

If serious racing is your name then er, *TOCA Touring Car* is your game. That sounded better when it was started. Honest.

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Somehow managing to sound rude despite being about dogfighting in planes

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Psygnosis have been busy this month. *Colony Wars* sees you fighting off a bid for alien domination

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JVC gives you the chance to drive a selection of Japanese cars around the hills very fast. Very fast indeed



REVIEWED Time Crisis

Ready, aim, Fire. TC is here so point your shiny new light gun at the screen and shoot 64

REVIEWED Colony Wars

Save the planet (again) courtesy of Psygnosis's smart new game 78

REVIEWED Pandemonium 2

Hands up if you think Nikki is sexy. Right, there's the sad loser. Get him 50

EVERY
GAME RANKED AND
RATED BY FIVE
EXPERTS



Digital Divas

With *Spicy fingers* in just about every corporate pie, it comes as no surprise that those purveyors of cheesy pop and high kicks, The Spice Girls, are set to make their debut on the PlayStation. The girls are apparently very enthusiastic about their PlayStation debut, being big fans of both the console and its biggest star, Lara Croft, who they see as being the embodiment of Girl-power (at least that's what their manager Simon Fuller said. The girls themselves would probably cringe with embarrassment if they ever read their own PR).

Going under the working title of 'Spice World,' the interactive CD promises fans the opportunity to immerse themselves in all

things spice. Including exclusive video footage, music tracks and interviews with the 'fab four' (or the emissaries of Satan if you're Phil Spectre) the title promises to be a genre breaking new combination of interactive magazine and videogame (think Parappa the Rapper mated with Just17).

In addition to the tunes, videos and interviews with the Spice Girls, *Spice World* will also allow the user to compile their own Spice Girl tracks from a sizeable stock of samples, sounds and tunes included on the disc. You'll also be able to direct the girls about the stage via a real time interactive dancing feature which allows you to choreograph their dancing routines.

The girls themselves have been pixelated for the PlayStation by Sony's in-house development team. Each girl is modelled using over 350 polygons each and they all have ten separate expressions (which is strange seeing as we've only ever seen them using the 'gormless' one). Although each Spice is



All five of the lovely ladies have been transformed into their videogame alter egos for the 'game', but even in the virtual world, Geri still looks like a pig



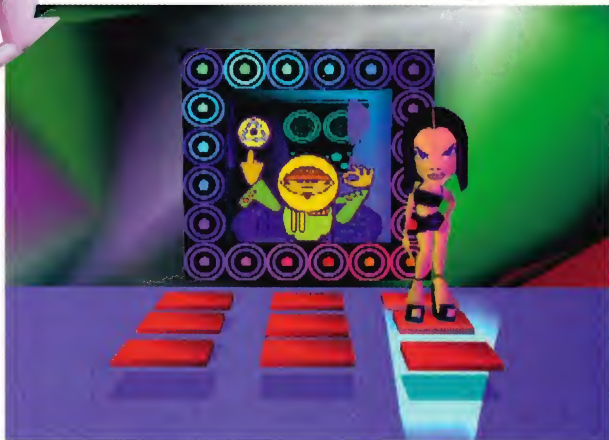
presented in caricature, the end result is meant to enhance each girl's character and lend a 'girl's own Yellow Submarine-type' flavour to the whole proceedings.

And it looks like Spice World is going to be no speedy cash in, botch job. Those behind the Spice Girls CD have a long and illustrious videogame history behind them, with team members having worked on projects such as Porsche Challenge, Total NBA '97, Rapid Racer and Medieval in recent years.

For those of you out there desperate to get your hands on the Spice Girls (for whatever reason), expect Spice World in the stores sometime before this Christmas when it will undoubtedly sell by the absolute skipload.



Expect to see loads of behind-the-scenes footage, exclusive pictures and hilarious interview snippets when 'Spice World' hits the shops - maybe before Christmas (fingers crossed, eh?)



news

Board Crazy

A few years back, some bright spark came up with the idea of smacking the wheels off a skate board, taking it up to the top of a bloody great mountain, jumping on it and scooting down the snowy pistes at insane speeds. Ever since then it's been one of the coolest (or some might say, ponciest) sports about.

The videogame industry wasn't slow to see this and back at the start of 1997, UEP Systems came up with the surprise hit, Coolboarders. Offering five tracks and a huge variety of snow bound tricks to try out Coolboarders found a hungry audience with armchair skiers everywhere.

Almost a year later and UEP Systems looks set to repeat their success with a massively tweaked and tuned sequel. Going under the astonishing moniker of Coolboarders 2, the game retains the basic feel of the original, whilst adding loads more tracks, game modes and player options.

New to Coolboarders this time around is the Half Pipe option (which will allow you to get some air and try out 40 different aerial manoeuvres without breaking your legs or spraining your ankle), an Olympic-sized ski jump ramp, two-player mode and 16 new tracks. According to UEP, the game also incorporates a dramatically improved control system that ensures that control

over the various boarders is much smoother and more intuitive.

In addition to this, Coolboarders 2 now includes a much wider variety of human racers and abilities. Cool Boarders 2 is released January 1998, so you'd better start practising your inane snow boarder dude speak now, you total Rufus.



As you can see from the screenshots, Cool Boarders 2 looks a great deal better than the original



A two player mode has been added, plus the chance to 'get rad to the max'. Or something



Hammer Time

Fans of all things Orc and Magical should brace themselves for the latest instalment of the WarHammer fantasy series with Dark Omen. Under a new agreement, EA will be sub-licensing the game from Mindscape, adding further clout to the already successful WarHammer franchise. Picking up where Shadow of the Horned Rat left off, Dark Omen requires you, as leader of a powerful army, to search for powerful relics and allies in an attempt to defeat the Orc hordes and the army of the undead before destroying the all powerful Dread King.

Unlike many other battle strategy games, Dark Omen follows a non-linear plot in an ever changing virtual world. If you are to prove successful in your attempt to defeat the Dread King, you will have to form powerful alliances with other tribes and armies to build up the strength of your army. Without control over archers, cannon, cavalry, infantry and (most importantly) magic, you won't have a cat-in-hells chance. Expect Dark Omen to storm the high street early in 1998.



Slowed Up Circuit

With Mindscape pulling back the release date for their latest top-down arcade racer, Supersonic Racers 2XS, the game is looking anything but supersonic. Rather than rush out a quickly cobbled together game in time for the Christmas rush, Mindscape have decide to spend a few extra months on the game (now re-titled as Circuit Breakers) so they can throw in more features, modes and options.

Now Mindscape are promising twice the number of tracks and modes such as 'grandstand', 'stunt-fight' and 'night races'. Mindscape are looking at a PlayStation release date in March '98.



Blow the Bladdy Doors Off

Back in the days when Michael Caine couldn't put a foot wrong, he starred in a film that must have helped shift millions of pounds worth of Austin Minis.

Now the film is an acknowledged classic and has hundreds of die-hard fans, many of whom like to pay their homage to the film and raise loads of money for charity. They do this by driving to Italy in their Minis, loading up on the 'liquid gold' (local wine) and then bomb it back again. Although it's rather a long winded way of getting to the 'offy' it raises loads of money for children's charities and gives them the chance to play at Michael Caine for a few days.

To publicise the release of their latest driving game, Felony 11-79, ASCII Entertainment Europe have decided to sponsor top Mini driver, Michael Sands in his cross-country trek to Trento, Italy. Whether he keeps the wine or not though, we haven't got a clue...





Peripheral Vision

Although some people reckon that the Sony Joypad is a 'design classic,' there are still plenty of peripherals out there if you fancy spending even more money. If you want the best, look no further as we've rounded-up all the handheld goodies that are coming your way this Christmas...

LOGIC 3

Protector Light-gun

This is about the lightest light-gun you can get – just by the side of the handgrip you've got a handy reload bar so you can do away with all that annoying 'groping for a hidden button or shooting off screen' type action when in the middle of a gunfight.

Predator Light-gun

Chances are, if you own a PlayStation shooting game, you own one of these. It's bulky as hell and it's good for building up your biceps, but it looks the business.

Dominator Joystick

Perfect for PlayStation flight sim fanatics who don't want to use a joypad. There's a total of eight fire buttons, digital, analogue and Namco modes and it's even got little suckers to stop it flying about the desk. Nice.

Control Station Pad

Logic 3's unique take on the PlayStation pad, the Control Station looks rather swanky and will stand up to a ferocious battering when you get naffed off by whatever game you're playing.



Station Master

Although having an unfortunate trainspotting name, the pad has a special slow-mo feature for tricky bits in games.

PSX Memory Cards

I think we all know what memory cards do... this one will let you save 15 blocks of memory area per memory card.

ASCII

Grip (one-handed controller)

Just think of all the stuff you could be doing if both your hands weren't glued to the joypad. One could paint a water-colour landscape whilst the other whisked through Final Fantasy VII. Well, that's the

thinking behind this bizarrely styled Grip controller from ASCII.

ASCII Arcade Stick

Wham one of these onto your desktop and you'll look like you're playing on Asteroids in a greasy spoon circa 1980 – tops retro appeal.

ASCII Analogue Joystick

Essential for thwarted pilots, these sticks look like they've just been pilfered from an F16. Excellent for playing Ace Combat 2.

ASCII asciiPad

A slimline alternative to the regular Sony pad which has the added benefit of looking like some sort of Batman throwing star.



WILDTHINGS

Wildthing Controllers – Assorted

These chunky fellas come in a variety of colours, from army camouflage to bright gold and silver. The perfect accessory to give your PlayStation a little character.

SONY

Mouse



When it comes down to it, if you're stuck in the middle of a game of X-Com or C&C:Red Alert, you'd prefer

to use a mouse rather than fiddle about with a joypad, wouldn't you?

Analogue Joypad

Sony gives two fingers (or two joysticks more like) to the N64 with its new and souped up joypad. Ideal for platformers and flight sims.

INTERACT

PS Arcade

Another great chunk of big buttons and ball topped joystick for those hankering after the coin-ops of their youth. Great fun.

Interact Programme Pad

A rather chunky, but nevertheless handy joypad which can be customised to perform pretty complicated functions.

Interact Light Blaster

Although the same size as the Predator this gun's a little lighter and looks like the weapon Gary Oldman used in the fab film 'The Fifth Element.'



Springtime Sony

Call us cynical old sods, but if you're buying games in the run up to Christmas, beware. You'd have to be an innocent and fluffy individual to not acknowledge the fact that there a fair few games that are going to have been rushed out to meet Christmas deadline.

A safer bet might be to wait for some of the quality releases appearing early in '98. We've just got wind of five games that Sony are going to be releasing in the future and believe it or not there isn't a single driving game amongst'em - indeed, the games here look a surprisingly original and eclectic bunch of digital delights.

First up is Treasures of the Deep, a 'Raise the Titanic'/SeaQuest/Indiana Jones-type concoction that will have you trekking about the globe searching for sunken treasure, nuclear warheads and lost satellites. Treasures of the Deep promises loads of James Bond-style underwater action complete with deadly enemy frogmen, eight different submarines to choose from and tonnes of hi-tech weaponry including night vision goggles, heat seeking mines and steel mesh wet-suits.

Another of Sony's new releases is the fascinating sounding Bushido Blade. Mixing fighting action and a fully explorable 3D environment, Bushido Blade sees you fighting it out in Meikkyokan, an elite fencing school deep in the Japanese countryside. The game can be played as a two-player slash'em-up or in story mode where you will be required to escape from the assassins of Kage, a shadowy underworld organisation.

For those preferring a slightly more tongue-in-cheek style of gameplay, Sony have Captain Blasto. As you might be able to guess from the title, Sony's 3D shoot'em-up is a not entirely serious take on the world of lycra-clad superheroes. The superhero in question here is Captain Blasto, a big, strong and pompous Captain America type who's fighting to rid the earth



of a terrifying alien menace - the Pear Troopers.

Videogaming golden oldies are also represented in the schedule. Namco's latest instalment of their Museum series offers gamers the chance to experience some of the more popular games from yesteryear. Namco Volume 5 includes the classic Dragon Spirit, Metro-Crisis, Baraduke, Legend of Valkyrie and Pac Mania. This compilation will suit those who go all misty eyed for Spectrums and Ataris down to the ground.

The last of Sony's springtime gaming treats is Point Blank, a (get this) cutesy light-gun game. Utilising Namco's ultra accurate G-Con 45 light-gun arcade conversion, Point Blank gives gamers the opportunity to compete in a total of 48 arcade stages and another 30 unique to the PlayStation adaptation.

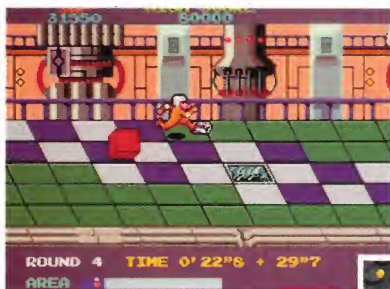
Although the basic aim of the game is similar to the coin-op (shoot cutesy targets left right and centre) there are loads of additional stuff you won't find in the arcade version. 'Party Play' for example, allows up to eight people to pit their marksmanship skills against one another, whilst the 'Quest Mode' allows you to run about a cartoon island looking for hidden treasure.

If you fancy a blast on a gun game that's so inoffensive you wouldn't be surprised to see it on top girly console the N64, have a look at Point Blank, a gun game with no body count!

If you're salivating with the prospect of seeing these gaming treats, worry not - you're not going to have to wait to long. Apart from Captain Blasto (which is penned in for an April release) Sony's new titles should be hitting the high street in the first quarter of '98.



Bushido Blade looks set to challenge the likes of Soul Blade early in 98



Pac Man returns just before Christmas in the latest Namco Museum collection

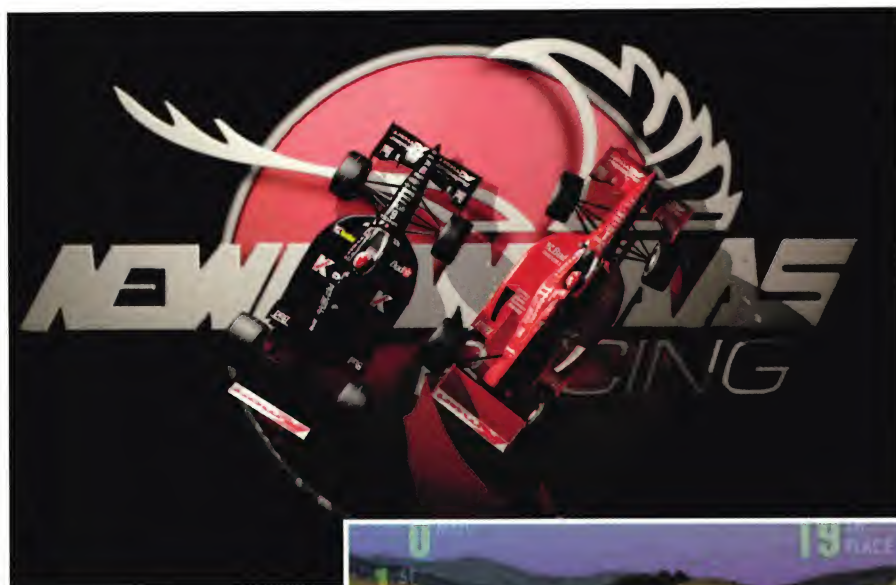


Racing game on PlayStation Shocker!

If you follow Indy Car racing to any level you'll have heard of the Newman Haas racing team. Famed for the quality of their drivers in Christian Fittipaldi and Michael Andretti, Newman Haas have been at the forefront of the Indy scene in the States for many years now.

Psygnosis have taken the opportunity to sign them up and set about producing yet another quality racing game for the PlayStation after the success of their Formula One titles.

Newman Haas will include 15 tracks including Toronto and Surfers Paradise in Australia, as well as all the usual tracks in America. Extensive set-up options, motion-captured pit crews and 16 famous Indy Car drivers will add to the flavour and look like making this a bit of a corker. Watch out for more news in the New Year.



High quality racing action guaranteed when Psygnosis wheel out this baby in '98



Rascal

How come whenever somebody travels back in time, whether it be in books, games or movies, they go for purely goody goody reasons, rather than to go on a profitable betting binge?

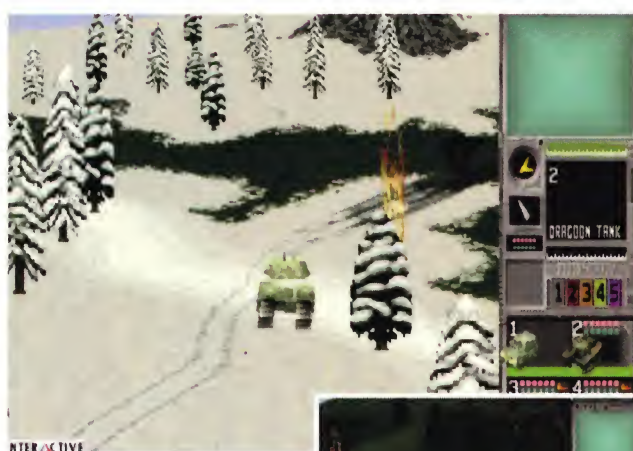
In the case of Travellers Tales' new platformer, Rascal, (which they're developing for Psygnosis) you're visiting the past in order to save it from sinister forces bent on world destruction. The time travel bit allows for some rich and varied platform levels including: Medieval castles, the Wild West, Atlantis and a Pirate ship and loads of different baddies, both ancient and modern.

With the character design done by Jim Henson's Muppet Workshop and a state-of-the-art 3D engine pushing the action along at an impressive 60 frames per second, Rascal looks like it might well be a surprise hit on the PlayStation.

The developers, Travellers Tales, hope to have Rascal ready for a March '98 release, so we'll bring you further details soon.



He's cute, he's cuddly, but he ain't gonna be a round until next year! Sob, sniff, boo hoo etc



Fight for your right...

MGM aren't short of a few bob, so it's no real surprise to find them in the videogame market primed and ready to launch their new title, Wargames, onto an unsuspecting public in April.

Featuring full 3D landscapes that you can rotate, pan and zoom in on until all your hearts are content, you'll be able to play 30 campaign driven missions in single-player mode or even play a split-screen game against a mate. Cool.

Believe it or not the game is actually based 20 years after the events in the original movie Wargames (you know the one where the hacker almost causes a nuclear war) and David, the character from the film has been employed by the US Government to perform some computer-related jiggy-pokery. Anyway, blah, blah, blah, (you know the kind of plot drivel that is usually spouted), it's looking pretty smart at this stage, more news as and when we get it.



STOP PRESS

EA Sports have been clicking their heels together with glee as they've just signed up England football hero, 'They Think It's All Over' team captain and friend of the Spice Girls, Gary Lineker for commentary duties on their World Cup soccer summer release. Expect exclusive interviews and plenty of indepth behind the scenes shenanigans from the PSPros early next year when we'll be meeting up with 'Mr Nice Guy' himself.



Stonking special effects, scantily-clad cyber chicks and Gary Oldman in a comedy plastic hat. What are we talking about? Luc

Beeson's **THE FIFTH ELEMENT** of course! Not only are spookiest Nightmare Creatures creators, Kalisto, converting this sci-fi cinematic dream to the PlayStation, but

the film itself is due out for rental from the 29th of December. Watch out for that the next time you're mooching around Blockbuster, but if you fancy a copy of your own – months before it comes out to buy – then you're in luck. We have five copies up for grabs thanks to Fox Pathe Home Entertainment and to win one, simply send in a postcard to the usual address, and make sure you mark it "T5E". Good luck.

JVC are pulling out all the stops this Christmas with **WING OVER**, **YUSHA** and **PEAK PERFORMANCE** hitting the shops anyday now, plus they're finally getting around to releasing **TETRIS PLUS** in time for yuletide too. And as you can see from the picture below, those cheeky chaps have hired glamourpuss Jo Guest to 'front' their ad campaign. Unfortunately, she's fully clothed. Exclusive 'kit off' pictures next month – honest!



Psygnosis have been in court this month following the dispute over their classic racing dream, **FORMULA ONE '97**. The official line is that Psygnosis recieved complaints from the FIA, the FOA and Giss Licensing BV over use of the official logos throughout the game, and swiftly agreed to withdraw the game from sale. FIA/FOA then attempted to obtain an interlocutory injunction (whatever that is) to

try and stop the game being re-launched. This was refused by the powers that be and now the new re-packaged version of the game will be in the shops soon – stripped of all logos and references to the FIA/FOA. So in a nutshell, the game is out soon and is in no way licensed by FIA, FOA or Giss Licensing BV. Got that? Right, now go and start queueing up for 'new' copy today!



Prepare yourself for some MK mayhem next issue as we get to grips with GT Interactive's long awaited **MORTAL KOMBAT MYTHOLOGIES**. Plus they'll be some hot nes on the new Mortal Kombat movie too!

BMG Interactive are sad to announce that their laughable lizard is being delayed. Oh yes, comedy wisecracking GEX and his new game, **RETURN OF THE GECKO**, will now be released sometime around March. BMG are advising you to buy **PANDEMONIUM 2** in the meantime.

Electronic Arts are getting ready for another software onslaught next year, with their cartoon conversion, **REBOOT** still on the cards, plus a new and vastly improved version of the old Mega Drive hit, **ROAD RASH** too.



Win exclusive FF VII goodies!



Ultra rare, ultra collectable, ultra groovy – these models will not be available officially over here, so enter the compo or you'll miss out!

Harder to find than a girl who doesn't whinge about everything, PlayStation Pro is proud to be able to give away these fantastic Final Fantasy VII miniatures courtesy of Project K (see their advertisement on page 110 if you want to buy any yourself rather than chancing your luck). Ranging in price from £9 for the small ones up to 30 quid for the larger ones, you can rest assured that these are so rare they're going to make collectors gag in years to come.

What we want you to do is simply send your name and address on the a postcard, clearly marked 'I'd like a Fantasy Figure. Please help me' and we'll just pull winners out of the hat and send them a figure until we run out. Last one out of the bag gets the soundtrack CD (also available from those top blokes at Project K) Okay? Sorted.



Despite everyone raving about it at E3 earlier this year, Konami have yet to release the stunning

METAL GEAR SOLID.

Rumours are it'll be ready around February, plus they've got **CASTELVANIA** and **NAGANO WINTER OLYMPICS** on the way too.

Interplay have put their water-related racer, **POWERBOAT**, on hold until March next year. and believe us, it's looking stunning.

Netherlands-based developers, Project Two have two new titles ready for an early 98 release, and they are the dual point-and-click adventures, **ARK OF TIME**, and **SIGN OF THE SUN**. Expect more details next issue.

Fox Interactive have secured the rights to the new Alien movie, **Resurrection**, which is nice. But their conversion of the Jaguar hit, **ALIEN VS PREDATOR**, is now rumoured to have been put on the back burner until sometime in the summer of '98. Which isn't so nice.

IS YOUR TV SCREEN BIG ENOUGH?

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Tomb Raider 2

If you thought the original was as good as it gets, then you are going to be disappointed to learn that it's just got better. The nightmare is about to begin again



Lara bloody Croft, she's the one responsible for making my life a misery. And your life too will be filled with anguish and confusion when Tomb Raider II smashes into the shops and countless homes at the end of November. It's got much more on offer than the original and it's a darn sight bigger. In all departments if you know what I mean (nudge nudge, wink wink).

As in the original there are many puzzles to solve and the exploration element certainly hasn't been lost. Exploration plays almost as big a part as the puzzle solving and there's something of interest in almost every nook, cranny and crevice.

The storyline in Tomb Raider 2 has now been integrated into the levels, which means you gain more clues and ideas as to what your goal is from the outset. And the further you play through the game, the more cut scenes and sequences you will see. Whereas in the original Tomb Raider you just arrived in new environments, now you see exactly how you got to these locales in the first place.

The story involves you searching for the Dagger Of Xian which will take you through several continents and many differing environments. The dagger has been pinched by Tibetan warrior Monks, who have hidden it deep within the confines of The Great Wall Of China. A fanatical cult known as the Fiamma Nera are after

getting their own thieving mitts on the dagger to unleash its mythical powers. Now you must travel from the Great Wall Of China to Venice, to the sunken wreck, to the Tibetan Mountains and then back around to the Great Wall Of China before your task is complete.

On top of the usual array of puzzles, there are now more bad guys to clear out of the way. There are a whole manner of new enemies such as sharks, tigers, yetis and plenty of enemy agents who stand between you and your goal.

While this sequel is going to gain no new friends, fans of the original will spend many a sleepless night exploring the many vast sprawling levels. The size of the levels has been upped considerably so those who thought the original was enormous are going to find this high on impossible to plough through.

The controls remain the same for the most part, but now there are a couple of additional functions such as the use of a flare for the dark areas. The flare is accessed via the L2 button and as a result of this the side step control has changed slightly. Now you must use the R2 button and press a direction to take a step to the left or right. There's also a new climb move so that ladders can be climbed and there are enough little touches added throughout the game which prove that this isn't just a simple case of more of the same. Although at the end of the day, it is.

Another new feature is the stats clock which



▲ This mean mutha needs to be taught a lesson in bullet avoidance. Of course if you're lucky he'll fall and crash to the ground letting you get on your merry way

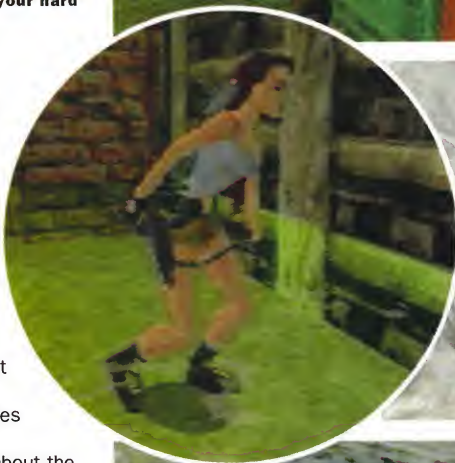


▲ **Watch for traps everywhere you go. All your hard work can be erased in one moment of carelessness. You have been warned**

tells you how far you've travelled, how many medi packs you've used and how long you've taken. It also tells you how many shots you've fired and how many have actually hit home. Since the clock works in real-time the game also works in real-time, so if you play for long enough, day will turn to night and vice versa.

The outdoor areas aren't as plentiful as all the recent hype would have you believe, but many levels do involve travelling through the open air at some stage, whether it be from one building to another or across huge gorges into another tomb.

A point which many people disliked about the original were the save game beacons. The beacons meant that you could only save your game at specified points. This was annoying as you may have been stuck on a section just before the next beacon and have to play the same bit over and over. This time around it's been improved so you can save the game at any stage you wish. This of course has both its



▼ **This is one huge beast! How long will it take to drop this one? And how on Earth can you get away from the flames it breathes onto you?**



▲ **Things are pretty tough at home for Lara. No rest for the wicked and all that. Give them a right good pummelling**



REVIEW

Tomb Raider 2

► advantages and its disadvantages.

The advantages are you only need to complete a section once and save it. The disadvantage is that some of the longevity is lost. Saving the game after every section means that the game can be completed in roughly the same amount of time as the original, although it's a much much bigger game. The only way around this is to save your game every now and then and not after every single section. But then again, I have a feeling that this option won't be used too much by most gamers.

The puzzles have been spruced up so that they are now much more mind blowing than previously. Something you manage to execute can have an effect in a completely different section of the level, so you need to spend time going back and forth several times.

Your arsenal has also been improved with you now being able to have a harpoon for underwater battles and an M-16 amongst others. These have bumped up the strategies

for shooting the enemy. Some are tougher than others and as a result need more powerful weapons to kill them. The range of the weapons also varies so you will have to find a weapon which suits you best.

In total there are 18 new levels to explore and complete to finish the game. The final two levels are short and simple involving blasting at a dragon and several enemy agents. The buggers will stop at nothing to get that dagger!

You're not completely on your own this time around however, as there are some allies to help you. Just one word of advice. Watch who you shoot at on a certain level. You'll find out why when you reach it. Leave a certain person alone and you'll be assisted against the Fiamma Nera agents for the rest of that level. Unfortunately for you however, you're on your own for the other 17 levels.

Lara's motion has been improved greatly so she is far more responsive to control. The jumps are where this is far more noticeable and this



▲ Your best bet is to get out of that window before the enemy agents appear from behind you and ruin your day



▲ That huge jacket is keeping my arms so warm, but my legs feel like blocks of lead. Oh well, let's try to make this jump over to that ladder



▲ A good tactic to employ is to search every nook and cranny you possibly can. Many of them will lead to disappointment, but every now and then you'll be richly rewarded with some useful items or maybe even a switch or two



ROGUES GALLERY

These guys will do anything to stop you in your tracks. But no! One of these blighters below may just give you a helping hand at some stage. Unfortunately for you however, the rest are hell bent on preventing you reaching that dagger



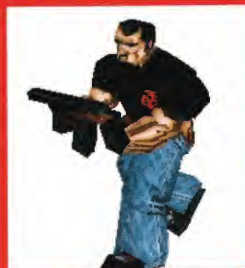
Cult gunman



Doberman



Goon



Hood



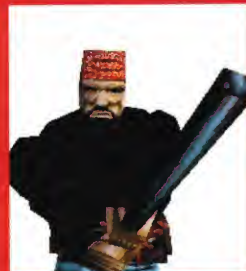
Scuba Diver



Tibetan Hood



Snow Tiger



Thug



Warlord



Leopard



Tibetan Warrior Monk



Tibetan Hood



Guard



Yeti



Tiger

improves your enjoyment of the game. With the inclusion of death slides, Lara has many more actions at her disposal.

Perhaps the most fun element which works especially well are the vehicles which she can use. Lara can drive a speed boat through the watery streets of Venice or take to the controls of a skidoo in the Tibetan mountains. This adds a whole new element to her abilities. Huge leaps can be made and special stunts pulled off in spectacular fashion.

The only problem with these vehicles is that they are temperamental little sods and a slight mistake can put you into untold trouble. That aside, they are a lot of fun and add more interactivity to the game as a whole.

Another detail worth mentioning is that the costume change from environment to environment. She begins with the same outfit as the original, but Lara changes into scuba gear and later dons a leather coat when it gets a bit nippy. These are details that aren't essential to the game, but just go to show the effort put in by the programmers to make Tomb Raider 2 a superb game.

If you play the training level this time around, you end up on an assault course in Lara's football pitch-sized garden which the Paras





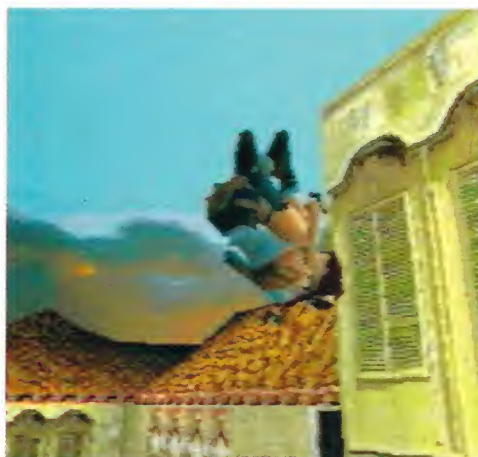
Tomb Raider 2

► would have a field day on. On top of this, you are free to roam the grounds complete with one of those annoying bush mazes and wander around the mansion at will.

If all of this isn't enough for you then there's obviously something wrong up top. Lara Croft's new adventure will keep you occupied for quite some time due to its size and challenge. The original Tomb Raider was more of a small cave compared with this sequel. The hype is now over and Lara has returned in style. The cow.



▲ This is a spectacular leap you can make to find one of the finest short cuts in the entire game. Don't worry about landing, you're quite safe



▲ The new climb now means that Lara can climb up to new heights with ease. Remember to try the impossible. You never know...



PROSCORE

GAME Tomb Raider II

GENRE Adventure

SOFTWARE HOUSE Eidos

CONTACT 0181 636 3000

RELEASE DATE Out Now

PRICE £44.99

PLAYSTATION APPROVED Having played this game solidly for a

month now I'm well and truly fed up with Tomb Raider 2. I've never experienced such trauma and anguish and if I never see Lara Croft again, it'll be too soon. It's got all and more than anybody could hope for and the challenge has now hotted up considerably. The save game rehash now means that although the game is larger, it will probably take the same time to complete with regular saves. In terms of graphics and gameplay the improvements are here for all to see. It will gain no new fans, but people who missed the original (admittedly few) would be wise to play that to be ready for this. She's big, she's bold, she's brash and she's back!

BY ANDY SHARP

GRAPHICS 9

SOUND 9

GAMEPLAY 9

LASTABILITY 9

9½

PAUL I have no sense of direction at the best of times so I can't cope with games like this. I thought it was more like a Data Disc than a new game. It's obviously a good game, but wildly over-rated

JAY To be honest, despite all the hype and the lovely hi-res shots of Lara's arse, I didn't really like the original game and so this sequel does nothing for me at all. Of course it's bigger and better, but it's still not for me

HUGH Tough, tricky and wildly frustrating, TR2 will have millions locked indoors this Christmas desperately trying to complete this awesome challenge. I love it, most of the population does and this will sell, sell, sell

JAMES After listening to Andy's cries of 'Bitch', 'f**king Bitch' and 'Motherf**king Bitch', I wasn't surprised to find that TR 2 is a challenge that you'll be determined to beat. It's infinitely better than the first, so buy it

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anywhere without
a **BACK PACK.**

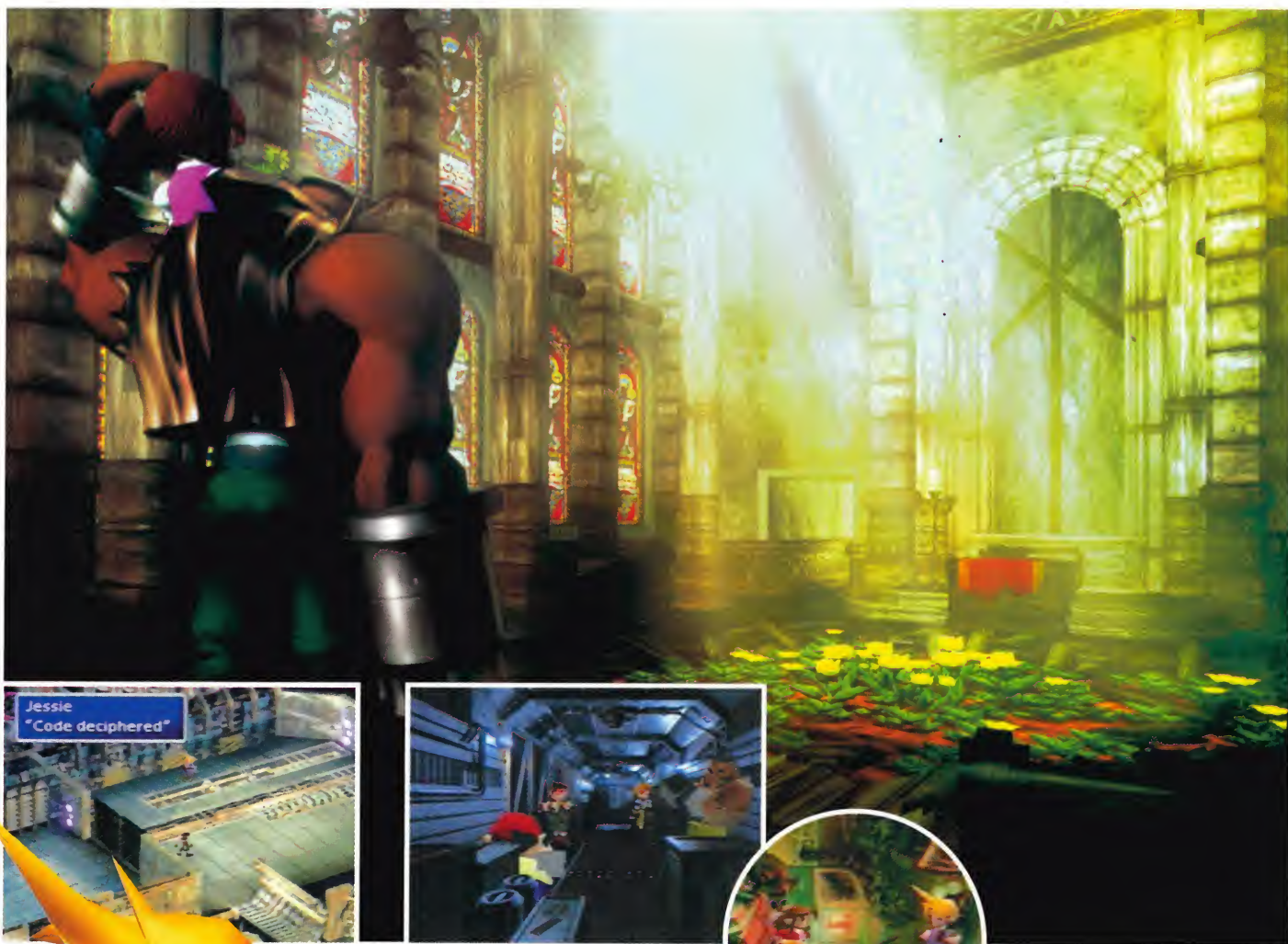


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Final Fantasy VII

The biggest game of all time is here. Does that mean that it's the best game of all time too? You know, we think it just might be...



Right. I've got five pages to tell you about the most phenomenal PlayStation game of all time and to be honest, for once, I don't know how to go about it.

I could start by pretending that I've completed the game, but what would be the point as I'd obviously be lying? In truth I'm nowhere near finishing it, deadlines wouldn't allow for that, but having said that I've still played it for longer than I've ever played any other PlayStation game.

If any two games sell tons more than the rest this Christmas it'll undoubtedly be Final Fantasy VII and Tomb Raider 2, which are both epics in their own way. TR2 though isn't my sort of thing, so I was like the proverbial cat that got the

cream when I managed to bag this little corker for review.

First, to kick us off, let's talk about size. Usually, when a game is large it normally consists of lots of aimless running about with nothing much to be gained at the end of it, or it's been made specifically huge to make the game last longer (stand up TR2!). Here we have the largest game ever made for the PlayStation and it's jam packed all the way with adventure as the story weaves its way through the stunningly realised world.

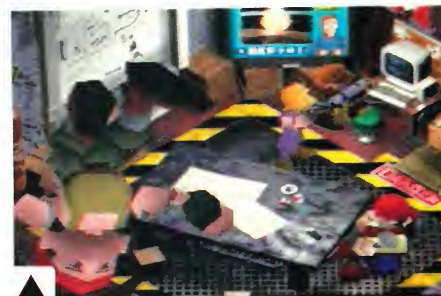
To give you an idea of just how big it is, Squaresoft, the developers, reckon Final Fantasy VII takes 50 hours to complete from start to finish. Now that might make you go



▲ With more camera angles than a televised football match, Final Fantasy VII never ceases to amaze with its level of detail



▲ Conversations are conducted via these little boxes that keep you abreast of what's happening. No speech though!



▲ All the characters are capable of an amazing range of emotive movements that enable you to work out what mood they're currently in

"Wow!" but when you also take into consideration that the average player takes much, much longer (somewhere in the region of 120 hours apparently), it puts it all into perspective. The most impressive thing is that during this time you're constantly playing out the story, fighting and so on, but this is much more than a role-playing game. To say it's like being in a film would be too easy. It's like being in a serial that runs for weeks and weeks. A Manga version of Coronation Street if you will.

Spanning three CDs, the first contains about 30 of the 50 hours, the second carries another 15 and the third contains the final five hours of story. This threw me at first as I seemed to be on the first for ages and thought I'd gone wrong somewhere but no, it's perfectly natural so you shouldn't worry.

After a brief Manga-style FMV intro sequence (that is beautifully rendered) you find yourself in charge of the main character in the game, Cloud. At this point you can rename your character just

as you can rename other main characters in the game. This option gives that extra little personal touch, so it's possible to play Final Fantasy VII with all your mates as the characters. Cool eh?

Anyway, after leaping off a train you find yourself attacked by a set of Shinra guards and this is where you're given a very gentle introduction to the combat engine that you will become increasingly accustomed to as you play through the adventure.

The screen will whirl into the combat section and you'll see your adversaries facing your character. On the right is a time bar and when this is full you can launch an attack. After your combat move has been completed, you will have to wait for your time bar to fill up again, during which time your opponent or opponents will be completing their own attacks. At later stages, when you have a bigger party, the action can become quite frenetic as you struggle to launch a combination of magical and physical attacks from several characters at the same time.

As the game goes on it also gets more complex in that certain spells and attacks are better against certain creatures, while others are useless. For example, using fire spells on ice ►



Final Fantasy VII

► monsters cause extra damage, but a freeze spell is obviously not going to hurt it that much. Anyway, that's side-tracking. After you've defeated the guards you carry on and start talking to the other members of the terrorist group Avalanche. At this stage you still have little idea of what the hell's actually going on, but as the story unfolds you discover that you are with a group of revolutionaries who are trying to save their planet from the evil Shinra mega-corporation. The corporation are bleeding the planet dry with their extraction of natural resources for their own gain and Avalanche are attempting to stop them.

That really is an over-simplification of the storyline which is set in a sort of Cyberpunk/Manga setting, with the Japanese's love of characters with guns and swords coming to the fore. All the people in the game have those now familiar big eyes, so if you like Japanese animation then this is an extra treat.

No scantily clad schoolies though!

The plot twists and turns constantly and at regular intervals in the game the members of your party will change as they go off to do their own thing. After what seems like an eternity (but a pleasant one, nothing bland here), you'll finally complete the section in your home town. Now this will probably take you about eight hours, which for a normal game, would signal the end. Roll the credits and all that. However, with this being Final Fantasy it means you're about 10% into it. Scary eh?

So off you go on the next part of your quest, constantly building up your characters' fighting prowess. This is done in the traditional RPG-style whereby you accrue experience points which help you progress through the levels, which in turn increases your skills

One of the bizarre things about Final Fantasy VII though is the different things people see as they play through it. There are three of us in the office who've been playing the game at more or less the same time and each morning someone would come in and say something like: "Did you



Cloud descends into the unknown in one of thousands of different areas tucked away within the Final Fantasy environment



Your band of eco-terrorists take a train to their next target. You control Cloud who is looking a little lost down there at the far end of the carriage





The quality of the FMV is second to none. It's like taking a Manga film and making it look a million times better



Our hero Cloud wonders which way to go next and how to avoid hurting himself with that huge sword?



The in-game graphics really do look like this, such is the work that has gone into the art in FFVII

see the bit with the Piano?" To which the response would be "What Piano? I didn't see a bit with a Piano, but did you use the Tiara?" "Tiara?" You get the picture.

There is so much stuff hidden away in there that your chances of seeing it all without using a complete walkthrough from the programmers are less than Norway starting up a whale breeding environmental program. And that once again is yet another attraction. You simply don't have to do everything in the game to complete it, but the more stuff you find the more satisfaction you suck out of it. Finding something you know is obviously hidden is immensely gratifying.

So that's it then. You reckon? Is it heck. Scattered throughout Final Fantasy and its million-and-one sub-games are groovy arcade sections that pop up every now and then. The first of these is a squat thrust contest in a local gym, but later on you'll be riding motorbikes Akira-style and even attempting to snowboard. These sections aren't annoying or as cack-handedly done as they could easily have been.

Each section oozes quality, with plenty of fast paced action blended with awesome graphical splendour.

If you pointed a gun at my head and forced me to come up with a downside, I'd complain about the lack of speech. However, logically this would have been completely impractical considering the size of the game. It'd have ended up coming on a million CDs. Although a little here and there would have been a nice touch.

It's all very annoying because I could go on and gush for hours about how brilliant this game is, but I simply haven't got the space to do it. And besides, you simply won't believe me until you've played it for yourself and started to discover the secrets and wonders this amazing game has to offer.

I see Tomb Raider 2 has already achieved a perfect 10/10 in a rival magazine and yet FFVII simply pisses on it from all angles. I reckon

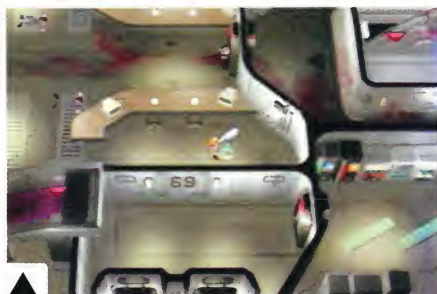




Final Fantasy VII

► this will be the only 9.5 out of 10 I ever award in my life. Final Fantasy VII proves that you don't have to make a game frustratingly difficult to make it last for hours and hours and it also proves what the PlayStation is capable of, which puts to shame all those rubbish titles over the past few months.

The attention put into games from now on should be judged by the love, care and craft that has been put into FFVII and any that don't come up to scratch should be slated accordingly. Anything other than Christmas No.1 is a travesty. Have I said enough yet or do you still not believe me? Sort your heads out and just go and buy it. Don't be put off by the role-play, if you miss out on this you'll be missing out on what is to date, one of the greatest gaming achievements on any format. Don't be that stupid.



▲ You're trapped in the headquarters of the Shinra Corporation and the only way out is through the cordon of guards



CAN FANTASIES COME TRUE?



If you're serious about getting anywhere in Final Fantasy VII, then you'll have to place character development right at the top of your list of priorities. With each battle that a character takes part in a victory will supply them with Experience points. Once a set number have been collected your character will go up a level, which will also gain them more Hit Points and Magic Points



Another useful way of making your characters more powerful is with clever use of the Limit Break feature. Basically, when one of your guys delivers a fatal blow it increases their Limit Break which means they get angrier and angrier until they eventually snap. When they reach this point they can pull off a special move, usually to devastating effect



If things start to get on top of you and you've progressed to a significant level, then the quick and timely use of your Summon spell will bring you help from beyond. Several deities can be called upon to obliterate your enemy in one fell swoop, but these should be used sparingly as they are expensive on Magic Points and also time consuming

PROSCORE

GAME Final Fantasy VII

GENRE RPG

SOFTWARE HOUSE Sony

CONTACT 0171 447 1600

RELEASE DATE Out now

PRICE £44.99

PLAYSTATION I've said it all in **APPROVED** the review, but if

you need it summarising then I firmly believe FFVII is one of the best games of all time. It's a sprawling epic that never lets up for the 100 or so hours you'll end up playing it. It's just simply wonderful and will be one of the games people will still buying years from now, without a shadow of a doubt. I know Jay and some of the others can't bring themselves to play it because it's a "bloody RPG", but that's their loss. Don't go the same way. Worthy of it's 9.5 a million times over, but I just can't force myself to give it a 10, although I'm probably being harsh! FFVII is an important a videogame landmark, just as Elite was in the 80s. Essential.

BY PAUL McNALLY

GRAPHICS 9.5

SOUND 8

GAMEPLAY 9.5

LASTABILITY 10

9 1/2

HUGH I've always been wary of RPGs and will go out of my way not to play them - Final Fantasy VII though cannot be lumped in with the genre. The gameplay is so involving and varied it must qualify as an essential buy

ANDY I've not had much time to play this as yet, but from what I have played it's going to be a monster all round. It's possibly the most involving game we've seen yet and should wipe the floor with the competition

JAMES While Final Fantasy doesn't do it for me personally, you can't deny how impressive it looks and the staggering size of the game. The level of involvement is immense and you'll be playing this for years

JAY It may look nice and offer hours of gameplay, but I hate bloody RPGs with a passion and despite the hype, I'm still not interested. It is, however, a big big game and something of a phenomenon. Maybe



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TEMPTED?

Power Soccer 2

Dangerous kicks, hand balls, speed bursts, power shots and a blind ref. Sounds like Arsenal are going to do all right this year...



Nothing beats replaying the most stunning action, just to rub it in the face of the opposition



It's that time again. England have successfully qualified for the World Cup at the expense of a certain arrogant nation with a liking for pasta dishes, Manchester United are riding high in the Champions League after dishing out a damn good footballing lesson to arguably the best club team in the world, and Man City have achieved the lowest league position in their history. Things rarely get better. A footballing euphoria has the nation in its grip and the fans have seldom had so much to shout about. It would seem that the dream status currently engulfing the sport in this country couldn't possibly be more intense; or could it?

The demands for competitive and attractive soccer are being shouted at grounds around the country, but sadly not every team has a Paul Scholes. Well, you shouldn't have been born in Scunthorpe should you? So for those of you out there that have to endure a constant display of tedious drivel on your miserable Saturday afternoons (like City fans), help is on its way to

relieve you of those footballing frustrations with the imminent release of Power Soccer 2 from software giant Psygnosis.

Expectations are high for PS 2 following on from the two previous releases in this series, and Psygnosis have done their utmost to ensure that their latest football release will be an all round improvement.

The gameplay has been tweaked to make for more variation when your team is in possession of the ball. The original was criticised for being a little static when running an attack, but there are now more ways to balance approach play. A new system of gameplay allows players to pre-program moves, much as you would with a multi-hit combo in a fighting game, which means the players on the pitch can string together some intricate attacking moves. Carving the defence open is now limited only by your imagination.

The stock passing, tackling and shooting moves are backed up by an abundance of fancy flicks and overhead kicks, all designed to aid you whilst making your way to the opponent's box. Plus the ridiculously unstoppable power shot returns to keep the 'last on the fence' players in contention, though this option is unavailable in the simulation mode.

Power Soccer 2 comes equipped with a variety of options, so that you can mess around with the set up until it's right for you. Injuries, match length and game environment are all present, but perhaps the most interesting is the virtual ref, who's personality can be changed from a blind ref who'll let the most crunching tackles go unnoticed, to a severe ref who plays everything by the book. Each has their advantages depending on your own approach to



Taking on the keeper can be very tricky. Looks like this guy's trying to take the piss. Shoot you daft bastard!





Volleys and headers are quite easy to execute and can look spectacular when done well. They're also almost impossible to defend against



gameplay, so it's best to consider who's in charge beforehand, especially if your style of play represents that of David Batty. It's also possible to have up to four people playing at any one time through the use of a multi-tap connection, two-on-two or all four-on-one team against the computer, potentially doubling the gameplay options.

Visually the game can hold its own among the new breed of increasingly impressive soccer sims with the actual stadia and pitch textures all looking effective, contributing massively to the atmosphere within the game. PS 2's motion-capture is some of the best yet seen with a random 'noise' element ensuring that individual players have subtle differences when performing differing aspects of gameplay, hence, two moves are never the same though they may come close.

On the down side, PS 2 is a little restrictive due to the aggressive nature of the game. The computer controlled players seem like they are always intent on breaking the legs of every player on the pitch, which means passes have to be strung together at extremely high speed if you're to progress with an attractive attacking system. While this keeps the action and the pace of the game at an intense rate, it doesn't compare realistically with a real bout of togga, and suffers because of it.

Commentary is provided by complete football bloke Brian Moore, and while his outbursts keep up with play quite well, they are restricted and become annoyingly repetitive after only a short while, not a factor that will add to the game's longevity.



That's Willy, the one-armed Bulgarian goalkeeper. He's not much cop in net, but watching him put his boots on is fun

PROSCORE

GAME Power Soccer 2

GENRE Sports

SOFTWARE HOUSE Psygnosis

CONTACT 0151 282 3000

RELEASE DATE December

PRICE £44.99

Power Soccer 2 manages to improve greatly on both Adidas Power Soccer and Power Soccer '97 while remaining true to their formula. All of the old games' failings have been addressed and improved to increase the quality without changing the feel too much. It'll be a dream for fans of the original and now offers an even more enjoyable challenge for those who couldn't get into the quirky, stylised gameplay. Plus the new options and superior motion-capture further increase its appeal. With a vast range of soccer titles available, and more on their way, Power Soccer 2 slots in quite nicely. Unfortunately, its deep gravelly voice isn't quite as loud as some of the rest.

BY JAMES CANNON

GRAPHICS 8

SOUND 7

GAMEPLAY 7.5

LASTABILITY 7

7 1/2

PAUL Didn't think this was a patch on Actua Soccer 2. Hated the commentary beyond belief and while it may be more arcade-like than its rival, you have to ask if that's actually a good thing. I think not

JAY Looks good, but doesn't really improve on the previous versions enough for me to fall in love with it. As James has said, this is purely going to attract fans of the original and perhaps a few casual punters too

ANDY It's not far removed from the original and therefore it's sadly lacking with the likes of Actua Soccer 2 on the horizon. It's fun for a couple of plays, but that's about it at the end of the day

HUGH Power Soccer 2 looks tasty and plays fairly well to boot. If you can stand Brian Moore's annoyingly repetitive footballing pearls of wisdom and the rather aggressive CPU players, then this'll be right up your alley

Jersey Devil

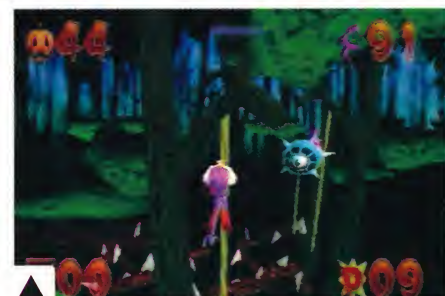
Mutant vegetables and pot plants are running amok in Jersey City as the Evil Dr Knarf attempts to conquer the world. Hmm, we could do with a winged avenger don't you think?



I suppose we should have expected it. Constantly relegating carrots and sprouts to the side of the plate for so many years, after a Percy Thrower wannabe has spent months telling them what beauties they are, was always going to piss them off. No doubt they felt betrayed, deceived and very much unloved, and it was only a matter of time before they hit back at us meat chowers. As for the pot plants, I don't know what they're so upset about. So I forgot to water them for a couple of weeks last summer when my parents were off on their hols, not very thoughtful I know, but I've always found that they burn in much better when they're dry.

For decades the infamous Doctor Knarf, the most evil genius in the history of evil geniuses, has been on naughty thought overload concocting plans to enable his takeover of the world, starting, for reasons known only to him, with Jersey City. Aided by his trusty pumpkin-headed sidekick Dennis, he's been busy with his scalpel and no doubt an immense supply of fertiliser, producing an army of veggie disciples which have begun the onslaught on the local townspeople. Nobody is safe.

Now call me stupid, but when situations like this arise, it's usually the catalyst for chaos on a global scale. Normally, the planet's most influential figures meet to discuss the end of



Climbing up the ropes is the easy part, but try and get your little purple ass over that floating mine without gaining another orifice, fly boy



civilisation as we know it, and how much it's going to cost to keep us all alive. Or the battle for humanity is left to the town's local superhero, and Jersey City is no different to any other fictitious location which is under the threat of a tyrannical madman. Indeed, this is the very place where the legendary hero/monster the Jersey Devil resides, and it's time for him to come out from the sanctuary of the shadows as only the JD has got the bottle to make pumpkin pie out of the evil minded Knarf man.

To thwart this sinister plot our hero must travel to every corner of the city, taking on the aggressive forces under the command of Dr Knarf to reach the labs where all of his Frankenstein-type experiments are conducted. Only by destroying these labs, and the warehouses where Knarf's supplies are stored, will the tyranny be stopped, restoring peace and order for the civilians. They probably won't appreciate it too much seeing as though most of them think JD is a bit of a scary bloke, but it's all in a day's work for your average horny-headed superhero.

The confrontations take place in various places throughout the city with scary Scotsman Knarf always one step ahead. It's up to you to guide Jersey Devil through the perils of the Museum of Natural Sciences, the Green Park,



the Graveyard, K&D's Chemical Plant, the Old Port and the Forest, where the final confrontation takes place. Each section has two hazardous missions that must be completed before the next area can be entered, and believe me, there's more than enough going on in Jersey Devil to keep even the most hardened gamer occupied for hours.

The locations are all reached via the Downtown area of Jersey City, where you will return after each successful mission for an evaluation of how you did. Each mission requires you to collect letters to spell the doctor's name. The letters are concealed in boxes and hidden rooms, and when you have found them all, they will form a key to access one of the numerous locked doors. The doors enable you to enter the next room and hunt for the next set of letters.

As well as spelling out Knarf's name a fair few times, you must find the quota of special K Boxes which will reward you with a bottle of nitro, a special explosive fluid with enough power to destroy the Scottish loon's labs and warehouses. If you've done the job properly, Jersey Devil's power level will increase enabling him to move some of the heavier objects that bar access to the bonus levels, which means more lives and more chances to find Knarf.

The gameplay is a mixture of traditional ▶



▲ In a fit of jealousy, Dennis goes on the rampage with his trusty wooden mallet. All of that talking to vegetables and plants must really get to them



▲ Laser equipped security cameras and bats will be the least of your worries after encountering crocodiles, werewolves and a T-Rex skeleton



▲ Switches will open doors and change scenery to enable JD to reach new places, although it isn't always immediately obvious what they have done. Still, that's a good excuse to have a thorough look around, and with JD's ability to open his wings and glide, there are many areas to take a butchers at





Jersey Devil

► platform and puzzle solving elements within a completely 3D free-roaming environment. You'll need to utilise all the skills of the horny devil to make any kind of progress, and that means pushing objects around, climbing flag poles and ropes, and jumping from one perilous platform to the next. Being a bit of a winged beast, Jersey Devil has the advantage of being able to glide across larger gaps though he cannot fly, which is a bit of a shame, but makes sense. If he could fly everywhere there'd be no point to the game now would there?

The various elements you'd expect from a platformer are all present, however much of the gameplay is based around your ability to jump and soar. While this is quite unique to this game, and is a seemingly new experience for a while, it can sometimes be a rather monotonous part of the gameplay on the more difficult areas. This doesn't mean that you'll quickly tire of Jersey Devil, more likely you'll just become infuriated by the challenging difficulty level of the game, which is tricky yet engaging throughout.

The graphics aren't the kind of stuff that'll have you screaming the words "Faster pussycat. Kill! Kill!" but high-res visuals aren't required in the cartoon world of Jersey City, and most of the time the lack of detail hardly matters. However, at some points JD can look a little too simplistic which may make more mature players feel like they're taking part in a sissy kids' game. Well, more fool them – this is no picnic.

Instead of great detailed backgrounds, you have a mixture of primary colours, nice animation and a wonderfully subtle orchestral soundtrack that would be just as comfortable framing the adventures of a certain Dark Knight from Gotham.

Plants and vegetables are Knarf's favourite source of organic enemy making ingredients, but he's also a dab hand at creating warped insects, crocodiles and werewolves too. It's not too encouraging to know that everyone is out to get you, but I feel Jersey Devil has enough tricks up his sleeve to pull through.

Ocean have come up with a challenging game that you will either love or hate. They're after a slice of the Crash/Croc/Gex market and Jersey Devil may just have enough going for it to muscle in on the big boys.



BETTER THE DEVIL YOU KNOW



Jersey Town, base camp for the evil Doctor Knarf



Who would live in a house like this? Fred West's a good bet



The setting for the twisted Knarf's veggie experiments



Apple coring practice with Jock McKillya's paring blade



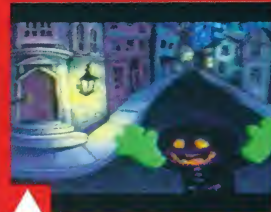
Knarf's assistant Dennis returns with a rare specimen



Ooh what a cute little devil! But where's ma' trusty scalpel



JD junior trashes the place and makes for a sharp exit



Years later... The town is terrorised by Knarf's minions



Ever danced with the devil in the pale moonlight?

PROSCORE

GAME Jersey Devil

GENRE Platform

SOFTWARE HOUSE Ocean

CONTACT 0161 827 8000

RELEASE DATE November

PRICE £44.99

My first impression of Jersey Devil was of a game that had a coolly sinister yet endearing protagonist thrown into battle against a bunch of comedy foes. It sounds like a recipe for success and it no doubt will be if you can ignore the lack of super impressive visuals. Don't be put off by the last sentence, because it still looks great in a cartoony way, which is no bad thing. The difficulty level of the gameplay is more than sufficient to keep you entertained for quite a while, you won't be finishing this in a hurry. That said, at times it can seem a little slow and repetitive, but this is balanced out by your sheer determination to get the better of what is an enjoyably frustrating game.

BY JAMES CANNON

GRAPHICS 8

SOUND 9

GAMEPLAY 8

LASTABILITY 8



PAUL I'm sitting in the Crash camp personally, but this is still a smart game. It's huge, frustrating and difficult, but it doesn't half look cool and play well. A lot of choice this month, but you shouldn't ignore this

JAY It may not look as polished, but JD is more than capable of giving Crash, Pandi and Croc a run for their money. Slightly tough in places, this game will have you cursing the purple punk right through Christmas. Buy it

ANDY At the end of the day this is a slightly twisted version of Croc. It has the gameplay and the graphics of a classic, but falls a little short as it does become a little too tricky at certain stages

HUGH Since the success of Crash, the PlayStation has been spoilt for choice when it comes to cute 3D platformers. Although nowhere near as cute, it looks as if JD might well give Croc a run for his money



Revolution

SEX AND DRUGS AND ROCK AND ROLLES.

NO WONDER IT'S ADDICTIVE.

BROKEN SWORD II

*ALL THE INGREDIENTS OF THE CLASSIC HOLLYWOOD ADVENTURE FILM.
APART FROM THE PREDICTABLE STORYLINE.*



Discworld 2

Missing Presumed....!?

It's time to dust off your pointy wizard hat and get ready to knock on Death's door. The Grim Reaper's nicked off and left the local undead in limbo... sounds like a case for Rincewind



Okay, one more push on the swing an' then I'll show you my puppies. Rincewind has to use all of his talents to succeed in his arduous quest



I don't care if it is strawberry flavour, I'm not drinking explosives alright!



Death has done a runner. Seduced by the alluring temptations of a life in the sun, the grim one has reaped his final harvest of souls and swapped his trademark robe of darkness for a pint of mild, a deck chair and a hat with lots of corks dangling from the brim. You see, nobody appreciates Death these days. In fact most people are downright gutted when they meet the bony one, which has left him feeling a little unloved and disillusioned with his chosen career path. Fancying a change of image and a bit of a break he hangs up his scythe and jets over to XXXX, a land of sea, surfing and sun.

Now everyone's entitled to a couple of weeks off each year, but when The Grim Reaper decides to don surf baggies, it doesn't bode too well for the recently deceased. Without anyone acting in the capacity of the 'Collector Of Souls,' the dead have taken to rising to their feet and wandering around the place willy nilly, demanding all sorts of civil rights and benefits, and the streets of Ankh Morpork are getting a bit crowded. Hmmm, sounds like a good excuse to send a half-witted wizard on a few manic quests don't ya' think?

When the first Discworld game appeared on PlayStation around the time of the console's launch, it raised a few eyebrows with its blend of cartoon graphics and tongue-in-cheek humour, but mostly for having the cheek to introduce a new genre to consoles, one that had previously been exclusive to the PC market.

The master stroke was convincing Terry Pratchett to give his permission for the development to go ahead, as he'd already turned down various offers from the film world to re-create the Discworld on celluloid, believing that even Tinsel Town's finest wouldn't be able to do the characters, storylines and fantasy worlds justice. However, both developers Perfect Entertainment and publishers Psygnosis were able to convince Pratchett that the gaming medium could be the tool for breathing life into





Typical! Halfway through the game and there's a power cut



his creations. The astute Pratchett was sold on the idea, and the game's creators made sure they didn't let him down.

We're a few years further down the track now, and the success of the first game, along with Pratchett's library of Discworld books, always left the door open for a sequel (or eight?), so it wasn't too surprising to hear that another Discworld game was on its way. The second instalment of the series once again puts the player in control of the hapless wizard Rincewind. This time out, Rincewind finds himself with the responsibility of restoring order in the spirit world as Death has done a bunk and left the undead parading about the place, which isn't an ideal situation (hygiene you know). So off he travels in search of the various items required to perform the write of Ashk Ente, a magical spell that will summon the Reaper from his aboriginal retreat.

The game is split up into four acts, each requiring Rincewind to fulfil a set of objectives in order to progress, which is the main story behind most adventure licences. Where the Discworld titles differ from the conventional is that they're set in a fantasy world that is based on the warped humour of Terry Pratchett and his bizarre way of manipulating common sense to come up with absurd solutions to the tasks facing Rincewind. Which means that Discworld 2, like its predecessor, is a complex and involving affair that will provide the most intelligent of players with one hell of a complicated challenge.

The original outing was criticised for being an immensely difficult affair, only those who were

familiar with the Discworld and its characters stood any chance of finishing the game, which meant its appeal waned. This point was well noted by Perfect Entertainment and steps have been taken to ensure that the follow-up is much more user-friendly.

Logical thinking will provide the answers to many of the numerous problems, although there is still a fair amount of trial and error involved, which is my only major criticism. At times, games of this ilk have a tendency to grate the nerves with frustration, and Discworld 2 is also guilty of engaging the player in some decidedly confusing puzzles. However, more detailed responses from Rincewind to the player's incorrect actions serve to keep you heading in the right direction.

There are no more 'that doesn't work' responses from Rincewind, as every action on every object solicits a sensible response. If the player is on the right track, Rincewind will let you know, and due to his eagerness to finish his quest and get back to sleep, he'll also drop hints here and there without giving too much away. To aid you in your quest, Rincewind has mastered the art of conversation and is able to approach the various characters in different ways. Selecting icons will enable the player to greet another character ▶



Touch me there again and I'll cut your bollocks off young man





Ah, Point-me-own-bone Dibbler's boomerang and cork-decorated hat shop. Discounts for blokes wearing dresses



Rincewind ponders over the curse of the mummy's tomb. They're just idle threats, that mummy looks pretty 'armless to me. Ahem, anyone got a bandaid?



Discworld 2

► as well as pose questions, make sarcastic comments and philosophise on the current dilemma. In certain situations you'll be able to ask specific questions relating to your quest with additional icons, which makes the gameplay a little simpler and less ambiguous without detracting from the challenge.

Rincewind's portable and seemingly unlimited storage facility, the Luggage, tags along behind our hero, always available should your collection of helpful little items, that our kleptomaniac wizard friend has accumulated on his travels, be called into action.

One of the most engaging elements in the first Discworld game was the level of humour involved, and fans will be pleased to learn that this game is rich with the unmistakable Pratchett humour which so encompasses everything the Discworld is about.

The design of the game and characters has been adjusted to complement the laughs, with Rincewind and his friends looking more stylised to facilitate the comical animation. The effect produces a cartoon quality that is rarely seen and so enjoyable to take part in, that even the most straight faced among you won't be able to stop at least the corners of your mouths from curling up a little.

Graphically the game isn't an award winner,

however, the deliberate use of a cartoon format only emphasises the fun element of Discworld. More time has been spent developing the audio quality of the game, it now incorporates a variety of ambient atmosphere setting music as well as some full orchestral tunes. It even has its own theme song with lyrics written and performed by ex-python Eric Idle who also serves to provide the perfect voice for the wizard Rincewind in his own cheeky cockney way, with Nigel Planner (Neil the hippie from the Young Ones), Kate Robbins and Rob Brydon providing the voices for the rest of the cast.

Discworld 2 is a challenging, but rewarding game with unusually engaging characters and a variety of intriguing environments. Perfect Entertainment have worked hard to improve on the original whilst keeping the gameplay, style and humorous approach that made it a success. The difficulty of the puzzles remains at a relatively high standard, though there'll be more information to work with preventing dead end situations and the forceful removal of hair.

Better graphics and sound, along with more speech and a large dose of fun ensure that this game has a lot to offer. Terry Pratchett's faith in the ability of the PlayStation to capture the essence of his characters and stories is repaid in abundance as Discworld 2 breathes a vast amount of life into his fantastic ongoing series, surely justifying a few more adventures from the back of Great A'tuin.

PROSCORE

GAME Discworld 2

GENRE Adventure

SOFTWARE HOUSE Psygnosis

CONTACT 0151 282 3000

RELEASE DATE Out November

PRICE £44.99

The rich vein of comedy and tongue-in-cheek humour that ran through the original title has been retained and intensified, creating a host of bizarrely funny characters and typically ridiculous plot twists. The truly baffling elements of gameplay have been addressed to ensure that while the puzzles remain as involving as ever, there's no need to possess an encyclopaedic knowledge of the Discworld to complete the game. This fine blend of challenging gameplay and the strange mix of personalities have produced an enjoyable title that'll keep you interested throughout. Quality cartoon graphics and action synched music add the perfect atmosphere to this quality game.

BY JAMES CANNON

GRAPHICS 7

SOUND 8

GAMEPLAY 8

LASTABILITY 7.5



PAUL This is a nightmare if you're sitting next to someone when they play it. Eric Idle shut up, please! Having said that it's fun, very typical of the books and an adventure game, so if you liked the first one...

JAY More of the same from Mr Pratchett and friends, so if you enjoyed the original you're gonna love this even more. Eric Idle's voice can get a bit annoying and repetitive at times but it's all good wholesome family fun

ANDY Having not played the original too much I wasn't overly excited about playing the sequel. It's a bit of a laugh however and will appeal to people who are into bizarre adventure games. It's as simple as that

HUGH I've always been of the opinion that Terry Pratchett is over rated, Eric Idle was the least funny of the Pythons and that adventure games are actually quite dull. Still, if you're into this sort of thing you'll lap it up

WHEN ALL ABOUT YOU ARE LOSING THEIR HEADS ...

... YOU'RE PLAYING



STARRING KURT HECTIC IN

"THE ULTIMATE SHOOT'EM UP"

PLAYSTATION PLUS

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Madden NFL '98

Big fat blokes in lycra pants? Enough of your fantasies. This is American football we're on about. Pervert!



▲ The introduction sequence in Madden NFL '98 is up to EA sports usual high standards with great animation and TV-like presentation



Ever since the hallowed days of the Sega MegaDrive the name John Madden has been synonymous with the American football videogame. It must be about seven years since the former NFL head coach first put his name to EA Sports' gridiron cartridge, and with a reincarnation every single year since then, it's quite easy to chart just how popular the EA brand actually is.

The Madden games have appeared on just about every popular games format over the years and its PlayStation debut last year saw it score a massive nine out of ten within these very pages. It was excellent and got plenty of play here in the PSP office. So it was with some anticipation that we cracked open the package containing the 1998 version and loaded it up to see what's been happening.

For starters, the game's slogan is 'Smarter, Faster, Deeper,' which sounds like some kind of ropery Seventies porno to me, but hey, this is advertising in the nineties...

EA Sports has spent a lot of time and effort working on its new Artificial Intelligence system which goes under the name of Liquid AI. This new system apparently makes the CPU controlled team play a more realistic game of American football than ever before.

Real NFL plays are included and EA reckons it has the smartest computer opponent ever. To be fair, Madden '98 plays a very tough game, even on an intermediate setting. As an example to the quality of opposition the CPU puts up, I had a

game with Andy too. Now Andy isn't known for being all that bright and certainly can't boast Liquid AI and, no surprise really, the scoreline finished up with me the victor by a ridiculous 100-64. Having said that, it was the first time either of us had played it, so let's just say that our defence struggled a little here and there!

So off into a one-player game I went, laddishly confident after tonking the hapless colleague, only to be over-run completely by, who I thought, were one of the weaker teams in the game. I managed a whole 93 points less during the game against the computer than I did against Andy. Let's leave it at that.

The best part was that the CPU team always seemed to adapt to what I was doing. Whenever I ghosted through a half gap with visions of glory flashing before my eyes, I was usually obliterated by a couple of 20 stone gorillas within the first five yards. Impressive stuff.

Well that's 'Smarter' dealt with, let's have a look at 'Faster.' To be honest, if anything it looked a tad slower than Madden '97 to me, but that was not necessarily a bad thing as it makes the game a bit less frantic and instead more enjoyable. The graphics are light-sourced and motion-captured (if you don't know what I'm talking about bear with me), and, while being a bit blocky, certainly look the part. Madden uses EA's own V-Poly system which is in operation on most of its '98 batch of sports titles.

'Deeper' is perhaps the most dubiously titled section of all, but EA Sports really do think

WHATEVER THE WEATHER



▲ Snowy conditions slow players down and make fumbles happen much more frequently



▲ Night games are played under the floodlights and can get quite cold in certain cities



▲ Rain will make the field greasy and awkward to run on while kicks will skid around



▲ Sunny conditions are perfect for football and the weather will not affect things



TIME TIME STATS

SCORE	0	10
TIME OF POSS.	3:49	4:11
FIRST DOWNS	3	3
OFF. PASSING	65	122
OFF. RUSHING	-19	78
TOTAL OFF.	46	140
PENALTIES	7	0
PENALTY YDS.	9	0



VIKINGS DRIVE SUMMARY

TOTAL PLAYS:	5
TOTAL YARDS:	56
4 PASSES FOR 56 YARDS	
TIME OF POSS: 1:01	
SCORING PLAY: FIELD GOAL BY S. Sisson OF 24 YARDS.	

CREATE player

AVAILABILITY	55
SPEED	40
AWARENES	45
THROW POW	55
THROW ACC	74
CTR	14
CAP	21
SPW	21
RAC	21
RTX	21
PDD	155



In Madden '98 you can create your own player and insert him into any line-up so effectively, you can put yourself in a team as a star player or just keep the rosters up-to-date



WAYS TO VICTORY

VIKINGS	• BY GETTING C. CARTER THE BALL, YOU PLAY TO YOUR STRENGTH.
JAGUARS	• RUNNING STUNTS TO FREE UP D. EDWARDS WILL DISRUPT THE JAGUARS OFFENSE.
JAGUARS	• THE MORE TIMES M. BRUNELL AND J. SMITH CAN CONNECT THE BETTER.
JAGUARS	• THE JAGUARS LOVE TO PLAY THE PASS AND ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO STEVE JOHNSON.



Each score is accompanied by suitable celebrations and dancing fat men. Can't go wrong really can you?

PRO SCORE

GAME Madden NFL '98

GENRE Sports Sim

SOFTWARE HOUSE EA Sports

CONTACT 01753 549442

RELEASE DATE Out Now

PRICE £44.99

PLAYSTATION APPROVED I was impressed once again with EA

Sports' latest offering. However, justifying a purchase isn't as straightforward as you'd like to think. Madden NFL '98 is a fine game, but if you own last year's offering, you may need to think twice about purchasing this update. Having said that, the range of plays and attention to detail is great, it plays like a dream and the challenge is more than sufficient. Some of the other members of the team weren't really into it, but I challenge you to find an accurate sports sim that's more suited to being a videogame. Now all we have to do is wait for Gameday 2 to see how the battle with Sony really hots up.

BY PAUL MCNALLY

GRAPHICS 8

SOUND 7

GAMEPLAY 8

LASTABILITY 8.5

8½

HUGH Lets get one thing straight, I don't like sport, and I dislike American sports even more. Having said this though, it looks like a decent enough game if you're into fat Americans in body armour

JAY No. I don't like it. American football is the biggest waste of time and money ever and I can't honestly see the attraction of it at all. And having a loud fat Yank shouting orders at me did my head in too. Poo

ANDY The Madden series just goes from strength to strength. It's got more tactical involvement than any sports sim to date and combines this with plenty of action. American football games can't get any better than this

JAMES As American Football games go, this is one of the best to appear on any format and machine. However, stop-start tactical overload Yankee footy is an acquired taste, so you'd be wise to try before you buy

PGA Tour '98

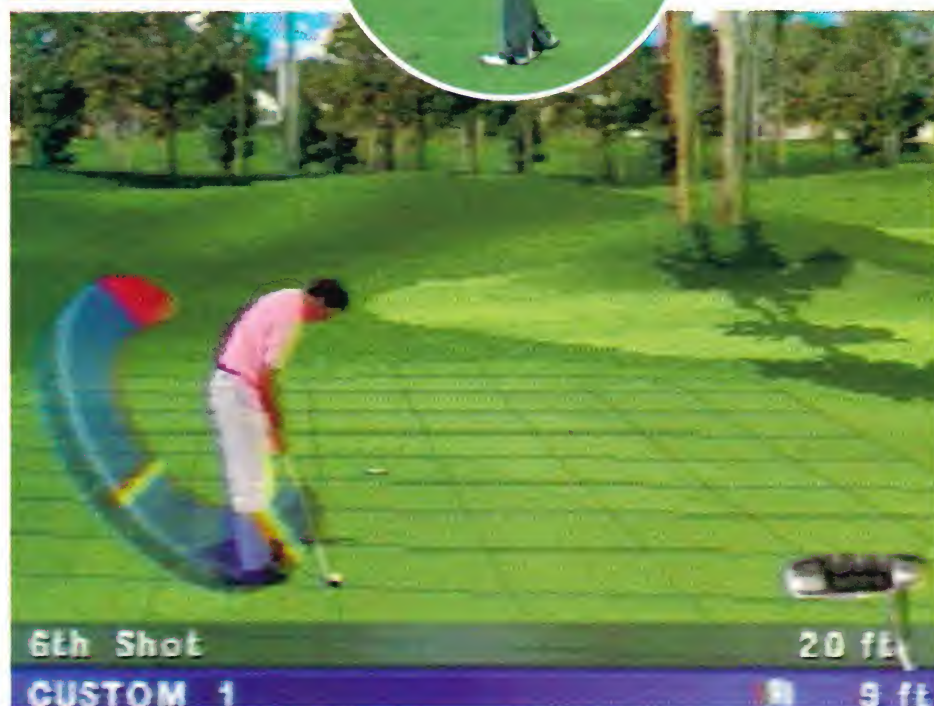
When someone says it's your round, you can only be disappointed when you discover they mean golf and not beer. Especially if you're an alcoholic



▲ **TOM 1** 20 yds
PGA Tour '98 comes complete with beautiful photo-realistic courses that redraw in next to no time. It all enhances the game no end



CUSTOM 1 Shot



6th Shot

CUSTOM 1

20 ft

9 ft

There are those out there that find golf terminally boring. I'm one of them. I just can't bear to watch the sport on television. Yet there's something strangely therapeutic about playing a golf videogame and over the years I've devoted more than a fair share of time to EA Sports PGA series.

If you were reading last month (and let's face it, you should have been) then you'll have already seen our preview of PGA Tour '98 and possibly, like us, thought that it didn't look too impressive. Well, I'm glad to say that things have come on tremendously since then and the reviewable code that landed on our desks certainly isn't disappointing.

One of the biggest selling points of the PGA series for golfing enthusiasts is that they can compete as or against 14 top PGA Tour pros.

These golfing stars have all been digitised and motion-captured for the game, so it's possible to have a round with the likes of Craig Stadler or even porn star soundalike Davis Love III. All 14 spent time in the studio having their swings and after-shot reactions meticulously digitised. If you're the kind of person who gets excited by seeing

the likes of Brad Faxon raising his arm in triumph after a long putt, then you're going to simply cream over this.

PGA Tour '98 plays like the majority of other golf games out on the market in that you control your swing and accuracy by pressing your button when a moving metre reaches a certain point. Press at the wrong time and you can fully expect the ball to go shooting off into the bushes or some equally inhospitably area of the course. Get it right and you can feel a tremendous buzz of pride as your sweetly struck shot rises and then gently falls right into a patch of lush green fairway.

As we've come to expect from the guys at EA Sports the presentation is once again second to none. Each hole starts with a detailed analysis, TV-style, that warns you of danger spots to look out for and makes sure you are pointing in the right direction.

Commentary comes from the tedious sounding American TV sports announcer Ernie Johnson Jr. whose voice really did begin to get on my nerves after a while. It was like listening to a lawyer make a long closing speech rather than someone trying to generate any real enthusiasm or excitement.

Course wise there are five included: Pebble Beach, Bay Hill, TPC of Scottsdale, Colonial Country Club and TPC at Sawgrass. None of



▲ Before each course you are provided with a description of what you will be up against



3rd Shot

Pitch

73 yds

STADLER

36 yds



these are particularly well known outside of golfing circles, so the majority of you aren't going to be recognising too many landmarks as you complete your round, but it might mean something to true fans of the sport.

What else haven't I mentioned? There are four different camera angles that allow you to check out the position from more or less anywhere on the course and PGA Tour '98 saves statistics like your career record as well as all-time records such as longest drive, lowest score and the humourously titled longest birdie streak to your trusty old memory card.

Once again EA Sports have come up with the goods. It's another good PlayStation game, again perhaps getting a little long in the tooth, but still more than holding its own. If you have last year's, as usual, think twice before removing your wallet from your pocket, but if you just want a nice relaxing golf game to drift off into oblivion with then you really need look no further than PGA Tour '98.



A woeful attempt will usually see you in a terrible position for your next shot



An overhead view gives you some idea of the lie of the land before you play your shot



A mat of leaves on the ground will make this next shot a tricky one



The distance to the hole from the tee-off point is listed at the bottom of the screen. Where you start from is dependent on your level



PROSCORE

GAME PGA Tour '98

GENRE Sports

SOFTWARE HOUSE EA Sports

CONTACT 01753 549442

RELEASE DATE Out now

PRICE £44.99

Can't really complain about much here. If CD loading times get you down you could perhaps have a little whinge, but overall the game plays well, is nice and relaxing and has no major glitches. I was ready to have a proper fight (no gloves mind) with the commentator after a while, as he was really beginning to grate on my nerves with his tedious voice. But this aside, PGA Tour '98 is great fun, especially if you have some mates round for that extra human touch. Worth a look if you're a fan of golf games, but it remains to be seen where EA Sports is going to go with this next year. Another rehash by any chance? Quite probably. Here's a company that really needs some new titles and quickly.

BY PAUL MCNALLY

GRAPHICS 8

SOUND 6.5

GAMEPLAY 8

LASTABILITY 8



HUGH Despite my phobia of all things sporty, I have fond memories of the old PGA games on the PC. Although lacking in visceral excitement, they are undeniably relaxing to play. And this one's pretty chilled out too

JAY These buggers get churned out year after year, and to be honest, I can't see the point of tweaking something slightly and then releasing it as a new product. It's still a good game though, although Actua Golf 2 is better

ANDY The earlier versions left a little to be desired, but this latest update is as good as they get. The only release to rival it is the awesome Actua Golf. Golf's appeal is limited, but it translates well onto the PlayStation

JAMES The earlier PGA titles were simple but a lot of fun to play with a few mates and this game isn't radically different. Having said that, it's been tweaked to rival Actua, and makes a damn good attempt at it too

Crash Bandicoot 2

He's back and he's better than ever. The PlayStation's cute platform king is back to cause more mayhem with more intuitive gameplay and more fun than ever before



He's back again. Sony's platform hero has returned, as cool as ever in the sequel to the excellent Crash Bandicoot. We've recently had Croc challenging for the PlayStation platform mantle, but he didn't quite make it. Now we have Jersey Devil as well and you can find out how he did elsewhere in this issue of PlayStation Pro, but the one we've all been waiting for is the return of Crash Bandicoot.

After the original scored one of our rare 9.5 review scores, people had to start taking notice and the game can now go down in history as one of the titles that set the Sony machine on its road to success.

Needless to say, we were all quite expectant when the CD containing the sequel landed on our desks and as it turned out, rightly so. Crash 2 takes off where the first game landed and continues the cute platform mayhem that made it such an instant hit in the first place.

Back are all the features, Crash's loveable head scratching, cute adversaries and crates a plenty to bounce on. In fact, at first glance it doesn't look all that different.



▲ You'd better hurry because that huge snowball is getting ever closer to your little Bandicoot and you don't want that to happen

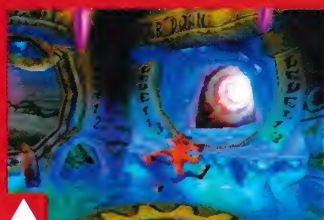


▲ How cool is Crash Bandicoot? Extremely would have to be the answer. Yes, Crash is back to entertain us over the coming freezing months



LEVEL HEADED

Crash Bandicoot 2 takes place over a series of different scenarios that you have to revisit in order to open up new sections to get the different crystals that are required. It also contains many hidden areas that can only be unlocked by spotting the secret entrance and then, once inside you can usually help yourself to the rich pickings to be found which will generally include goodies such as apples, extra lives and even protection if you're lucky



At the beginning of each section you will get a choice between a number of levels. You can choose to go back to at any time



Once you've decided which level to attempt, simply jump into the void and you will be sucked through to area of your choice



Sometimes the levels may prove too difficult so it's sometimes wise to take a step back and have a go at a different one



After successfully completing a section, Crash will have a bit of a comical dance to celebrate before moving on to the next section

However, Crash Bandicoot 2 is much more involved, trickier and generally more polished than before. In come new moves and new sections to rest neatly side-by-side with what we are already familiar with and you can't help smiling at some of Crash's mad activities and totally crazy actions.

At the end of the day though, surely CB2 is simply a platform game on a format that already has an abundance of them? Well yes and no. On the one hand you have to press one button to leap about relentlessly and another to spin around, more or less like every other game of this ilk. Yet on the other,

it's all done so very well with sub games and so on, it's difficult to think of it as just another platform game.

This time around Crash, (in case you're new he's a Bandicoot – a sort of wild dog-type thing – hence his name really) has been captured and given a quest to collect crystals from five levels in order to set himself free and escape back to his lovely girlfriend, who (no slur on her) is actually a dog! What ensues is a frantic dash



Try to crack the crates while on the ice skates, but you have to take care to avoid the explosive ones lying around

Contact with many of the objects on this level will cause instant death, so it really is a case of using your memory as you run



Crash Bandicoot 2

► around the levels, desperately trying to avoid being killed as it gets increasingly difficult. Scattered around, just like last time, are a large volume of crates which can be smashed to reveal goodies. Usually these are just apples which, once 100 have been collected, will give you a handy extra life to play with, but sometimes you'll collect extra lives and other forms of protection as well.

Having said that, certain crates are extremely hazardous to Crash's health. These are marked TNT or Nitro and will usually explode if Crash comes into contact with them. Now you might think that

they're going to be pretty easy to avoid, but they're usually placed in areas where control of your character is more difficult. For example, on the skiddy ice patches where Crash will slip and slide all over the show, care must be exercised in order to avoid a nasty collision.

For the most part Crash Bandicoot 2 has you running 'into the screen' if you know what I mean. The more traditional view of a horizontal sideways scrolling platformer tends to be represented in the bonus sections of the game that are also

plentiful. Occasionally, again as with the first game, there are sections where you are running 'out of the screen' with Crash being chased by a huge boulder or a massive Polar Bear. These levels see you put under tremendous pressure to escape being crushed or eaten while avoiding the numerous strategically placed obstacles put in your way. It's pretty difficult to make all the jumps and avoid the electric fences when you can't even see them until the last minute, but that is the nature of the game and it is great fun.

Another section that is similar to the original is the Polar-Bear riding section. You might remember that last time it was a Wild Hog, but at this festive time of year you get to ride around a nice snowy level on the back of a baby bear, that is quite possibly the cutest character I've ever seen. You can't help but smile when you eventually time a jump badly and end up in the freezing water only to emerge as a frozen ice cube, with your former ride sat astride it looking sheepish. Excellent cute stuff.

It's touches like these that make playing Crash Bandicoot 2 so appealing. It's jolly, humorous and easy to pick up, but difficult to put down and for me you can't really ask for much more from a game.

I know the original got 9.5, but this sequel is going to get a nine out of me because, while certainly being as good a game, it's not quite as original and is pretty similar on the whole, so sorry about that Crash!



ARE YOU SITTING COMFORTABLY?

At various points in the game you're going to come across 'vehicles' that Crash will have to ride if he is to successfully complete the level. These include the aforementioned baby Polar Bear, but there's also a motor scooter and jet pack that you'll have to learn how to control. Despite being a little on the crazy side, it's great fun watching you career all over the show and for some mystifying reason it's not even frustrating



Here we see Crash riding a baby polar bear which is quite possibly the cutest character you'll ever see in a videogame. Ever!



Sooner or later Crash is going to have to learn to ride the jetbike to get across certain sections. It's tricky to pick up, but hilarious



On other sections you may even find yourself being chased as you ride your polar bear as quickly as possible without hitting anything



Ice skates are difficult to get to grips with and it's easy to slide into any of the conveniently placed TNT crates on the ice

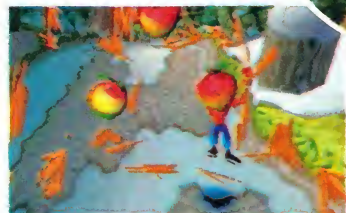


CRASH, BANG, WALLOP!!!

Perhaps the best thing about *Crash Bandicoot 2* is actually behind the scenes rather than obviously slapping you in the face. A clever piece of programming jiggery-pokery means that *Crash 2* actually adapts to your gaming skill as you hammer through the levels. For example, if you're doing well, things will get trickier, and if you're absolute dirt then it'll get easier, so all the girls out there can rest easy! This is the kind of advance in gaming that we could begin to see a lot more often as developers begin to use the PlayStation to its full potential. Cool



The variation in levels means you are never quite sure what you will come up against next, or for that matter, where it will be!



Get caught up in those nasty jaws and you can be sure you're going to get more than a severe bruising



PROSCORE

GAME Crash Bandicoot 2

GENRE Platform

SOFTWARE HOUSE Sony

CONTACT 0171 447 1600

RELEASE DATE Out now

PRICE £44.99

You just can't knock *Crash Bandicoot 2*. It's excellent in every respect. If you were lucky enough to play the first and enjoyed it then you simply have to go and buy this one. The levels are better thought out and tougher, Crash has many more personality features and the game is the most intelligent platformer to date. If I have to complain it would be that maybe the two games are a little too similar and no much thought has gone into originality this time around, but Crash certainly kept my attention for ages though, despite this. More of the same it might be, but when it was as brilliant as it was, who cares? We've had some cracking games this month and I pity you for having to choose.

BY PAUL MCNALLY

GRAPHICS 9

SOUND 8

GAMEPLAY 9

LASTABILITY 8

9

HUGH The main problem with the first *Crash* was that it was, to a large degree 'on rails.' This still is, but the play environment is much bigger and much more interesting. Plus the gameplay is undeniably addictive. Buy it now

JAY There's more to do and loads more to see in this excellent update of the furry freak. The jet pack levels are excellent, the polar bear section is wicked and this is definitely the best platform game this year

ANDY I wasn't a big fan of the original, but this is much more like it. It's a lot of fun to play and has more than its fair share of action. It looks fantastic and will give anybody a run for their money

JAMES The original went down a storm and *Crash 2* should have you all running around with the mad marsupial again. It's an excellent game with oodles of playability and quite frankly there's nothing better

TOCA

Touring Car Championship

Another day, another dollar, another racing game. Can you really get enthusiastic about yet another new racing game? Well as a matter of fact...



▲ Before attempting to play TOCA please disregard anything you ever learnt about driving responsibly

The first time I ever saw a touring car race was by accident one Sunday when I was flicking across the TV channels trying to find something more interesting than Sunday Worship to watch. Ever since then, I've sworn blind that watching 20 rep mobiles engaged in vicious high speed battles is about 10 times more interesting than Formula One. Where the onus in F1 is on strategy – when to take pit stops, when to refuel etc. – in Touring Car the races are short, sharp and unbelievably combative. You'll get 10 cars all attempting to take a corner at 90 mph, with each car only inches from the other's bumper. And of course, with all this close proximity driving there comes

with it a much higher than average number of smashes and crashes.

Strange then that Touring Car racing has never really inspired a huge amount of videogames. Perhaps the relative obscurity of the sport has been to blame? However, Codemaster's latest release, TOCA Touring Car Championship should redress the balance.

To anybody unfamiliar with the TOCA world, the aim of the game is to race a souped-up and dangerously fast production saloon car around various race courses within the UK. You've got a total of eight beasts to choose from including Audis, Renault Lagunas, Nissan Primers and Ford Mondeos.

The names of the cars might sound distinctly unexotic, but believe me, they're immense fun to race. And it is in the racing where the principal strength and selling point of TOCA lies.

Although the game is a faithful recreation of a TOCA race, the short sharp and bad tempered battles that are distinctive to this style of race ensures that the action never gets dull or tedious like it might tend to in an F1 tournament. Unless you spin out or crash really badly and make a complete hash of getting back on the track again, you'll find yourself constantly battling with the main pack. The difference between being 14th and being second is essentially very small. You are always able to claw your way back into a good position and get



▲ Watch the damage mount up as lap by lap your car gets punished by every other psycho on the track



Particularly handy is the rear view camera. With a bit of practice you'll be able to see who's trying to overtake you so you can shove them off the road

right back in where the action is. It's a beautiful combination – you get the action of a Ridge Racer type arcade racer whilst still retaining lots of realism.

Unlike all too many arcade oriented fare, the cars all handle unnervingly realistically. Brake at the wrong point whilst cornering, and your car will flip out, likewise touch the grass at high speed and the car's handling goes pear-shaped.

Unlike all too many race games, the dynamics feel right – the car turns from the front, and, whether or not the rest of the car follows is down to how you apply the power. Each car has its own distinctive handling characteristics, allowing you to find the ideal car for your own driving style. If you're a beginner, pick the Audi as its four-wheel drive should help you keep on the road whilst cornering. If however, you don't mind the odd spin, but want to make up the time on the straights, go for the fastest car available, in this case the Laguna.

Graphically TOCA looks the dog's bollocks. Puffs of smoke stream from the wheels as you brake heavily, rubber and mud is left on the track when you spin off and after every smash



One shunts in TOCA can be spectacular. With cars packed so close together the slightest shunt can cause huge pile-ups like this



One careful lady owner...



HONDA ACCORD
A forgiving but rather dull car



AUDI A4 QUATTRO
Four-wheel drive German gem



VAUXHALL VECTRA
16 valve rep special



VOLVO S40
The sensible choice



FORD MONDEO
Handles well but lacks speed



NISSAN PRIMERA
Japanese blandfest



PEUGEOT 406
Crap adverts. Nice car though



RENAULT LAGUNA
The fastest car on the track



TOCA Touring Car Championship

► and bump, damning evidence will be left on the car's body panelling. If you try racing in the rain you'll be able to see the car's rear lights shimmering in the vapour trail kicked up by the tires. The attention to detail is just superb.

You can catch all the action from the best vantage points because all the views are well thought out and presented. The two external views are good for when you're racing in the pack, a bonnet view gives a real impression of speed, but for true realism try the in-car view. Although this mode obscures the dash and door pillars, you do get to see your virtual hands gripping the wheel and reaching down to change up or down the gears. This view is so realistic that when cornering, the whole view tilts as the car leans into a bend.

Greatly adding to the realism, the sound recreates all the proper racing noises, from the screaming engine, the squeal of the brakes and even the gravel kicking up against the underside of the car. Jump into the in-car view and all the

race sounds are madly amplified and much tinnier. And if you're a fan of Top Gear on telly, then you might recognise the voice of Tiff Niddel, the bloke who does the introductory voice-overs for the championship mode. There isn't any in-race commentary, but to be totally honest I don't think you need it. If you turn the MOR dance tunes off and whack the volume up so you can hear all roaring engine notes, then it'll be atmospheric enough.

Even if you've never seen a TOCA race, I'd advise you to have a look at this. You may initially be quite dismissive of racing unexotic cars at unexotic locations (Donnington Park is, after all, best noted for its Monsters of Rock festival), but wait until you're in a crowded and bad tempered race with the other drivers attempting to nudge you off on the corners. When you're breaking hard and leaning madly into a bend with a dozen cars attempting to cut in front of, you'll find TOCA beats far more exciting sounding fare hands down.



"Get out of my way y'git." The packed starts are guaranteed to raise the blood pressure

▲ Racing in the wet is a terrifying experience. If you're having problems on the corners though, try using the other cars as mobile crash barriers - works a treat!



GENRE COMPARISON

Game Nascar '98
Software House Electronic Arts
The American equivalent of TOCA sees those fearless Yanks driving round in huge Chevies, but the fact that they only seem to drive around on ovals tends to make the races slightly less interesting though

PROSCORE

GAME TOCA Touring Car Champ.

GENRE Racing

SOFTWARE HOUSE Codemasters

CONTACT 01926 814132

RELEASE DATE Out Now

PRICE £44.99

PLAYSTATION APPROVED What Codemasters have managed here

is a seamless blend of high speed racer and simulation. Despite being technically accurate, the game is still a challenging and addictively fast and furious racer. It's excellent to play and, to be totally honest, couldn't have captured the essence of Touring Car any better than if they'd just shrunk Donnington Park and 20 high performance motors and bottled them. The frighteningly realistic car handling, the superb graphics and the excellent sound effects all combine to make a game that, if I was to be contentious, I'd say was better than F1 '97. If you're a racing game fanatic, buy this now.

BY HUGH POYNTON

GRAPHICS 9

SOUND 9

GAMEPLAY 9

LASTABILITY 9



JAMES TOCA is a rival for any game in this genre. The playability is second to none and it looks so realistic that you'll be trying to push your feet through yer mam's best Wilton carpet at each breakneck bend. Buy it

JAY Not really a frantic arcade racer nor an in-depth technical overload, TOCA is instead an enjoyable and delicious blend of the two. The playability is cranked to the max and the graphics are lush too. An absolute beauty

PAUL I've seen this a couple of times over the last few months and it's improved every time. It's finally turned out to be a very classy racing sim and another game of which Codemasters should be very proud

ANDY Granted this is an enjoyable game but it certainly doesn't better F1 97 for thrills and spills. It is nonetheless a fantastic game which'll have racing pundits wetting their pants. Quite an achievement







FORMULA KARTS™

Special Edition

"...Telstar might just have one of the surprise hits of Christmas 97 on their hands."

PlayStation
Magazine

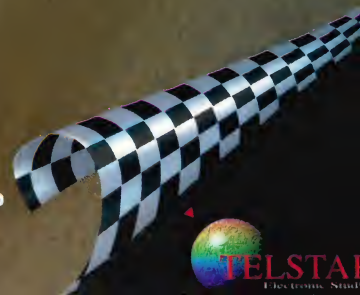


-  Race 8 different teams on 8 exciting tracks
-  Wide variety of surfaces & conditions plus secret 9th track!
-  Single player & 2 player split screen options
-  Accurately modelled kart dynamics & motion captured drivers for unrivalled realism
-  2 racing cameras & multiple drive by views
-  Championship, Practice, Single Race & Arcade modes



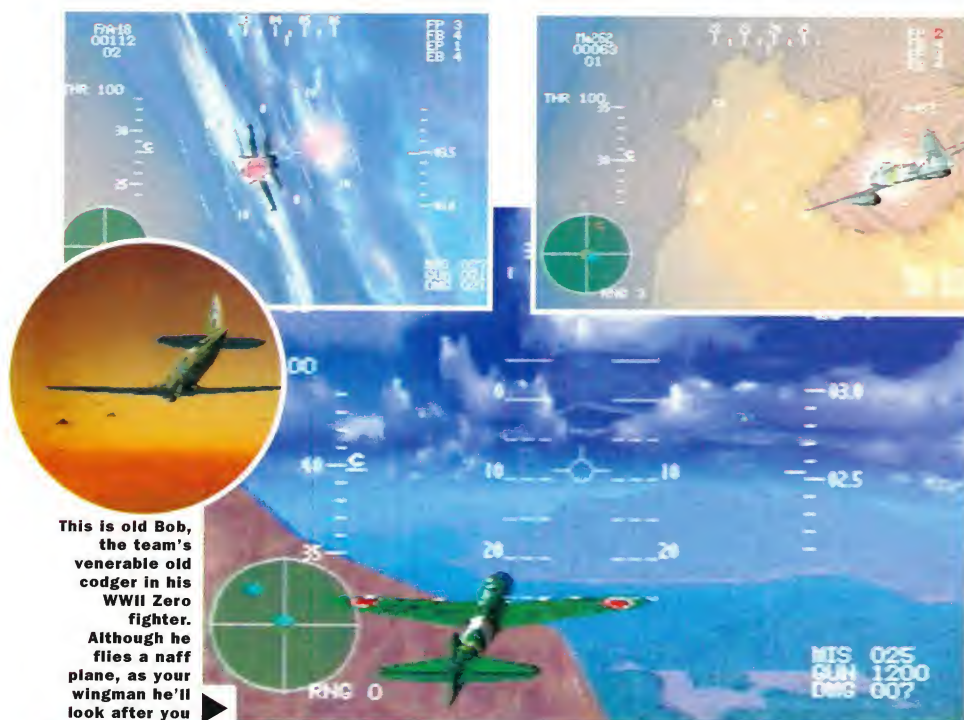
TELSTAR ELECTRONIC STUDIOS LTD., The Studio, 62-64 Bridge Street, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, KT12 1AP
Tel: 01932 222 232 Fax: 01932 252 702 e-mail: tes@telstar.co.uk web site: www.telstar.co.uk/tes

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Wing Over

In the 21st Century, Crown Green bowling and County League cricket just don't pull in the crowds. So make way for the sport of the future – the Wing Over contest...



This is old Bob, the team's venerable old codger in his WWII Zero fighter. Although he flies a naff plane, as your wingman he'll look after you

Well that's all from the Death Lawnmower Sunday Challenge Tournament, now over to the Japanese International Plane Destroying Open."

Sounds a little more interesting than your average Sunday Grandstand doesn't it? Well, according to JVC that's the sort of link we might be hearing the cybernetic Des Lynam saying one dull Sunday afternoon in the year 2089 or thereabouts.

You see, world peace has broken out and the human race has decided to vent off its frustrated blood lust by organising a new sport where teams of intrepid pilots fly the great planes of the 20th century against one another in bloody combat. (What I don't understand is why nobody thinks to buy up a few copies of Wing Over and do the whole thing from comfy armchairs without anybody getting hurt?).

Well okay, it may not be the most original game premise in the world but, who cares? It's simple and it lets you get slap bang into the action right from the off. All you need to do is get yourself and your intrepid team mates through ten competition tournaments whilst earning yourself pot loads of cash, allowing you to upgrade to better planes.

It is worth noting that fans of spoddy bland flight sims are going to hate Wing Over, partly because it's not technically accurate in the least, but mainly because it is immensely fun to play. Once you manage to dig your way through the pretty uninspiring intro screens and options menus, you quickly become aware that the actual gameplay is frenetic, challenging and most importantly, strangely addictive.

Wing Over's main strength is the fact that the action is so closely focused on dog-fighting. In all too many flight sim shoot'em-ups, shooting down the enemy consists mainly of firing missiles at faint dots in the distance – you hardly ever see the enemy close up. Not so in Wing Over. The action is so close that most of the time you're in real danger of piling into the back of the plane you're shooting at. It's real fast, furious seat of the pants stuff.

Although there are a number of different game modes to choose from (including a practice session which allows you to test out the strengths and weaknesses of the various planes you've bought and a Tekken 2 style survival mode where you pit your wits against ever more challenging bad guys), the best action is to be had in the tournament mode. In 10 contests held all over the globe, you have to destroy the opposition and, if you get the opportunity, blow their base up. Despite sporting names such as Brookie Bints, Spice and Virgin Boys the other teams are hard as

WINGS AND THINGS



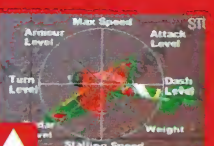
MACCHI C.202
Slow and vulnerable



SHINDEN
The fastest prop plane



WILDCAT
Heavy but very strong



REI SEN
Agile Japanese fighter



FOKKER DR1
Cheap'n'nasty. Avoid



P51 MUSTANG
Famous WWII fighter



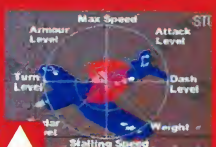
SPITFIRE
Classy WWII fighter



ZERO
Old Bob's favourite



ME 262
Heavily armed jet



CORSAIR
Ugly but mean



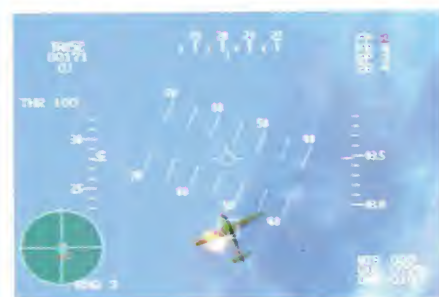
ME 109
Speedy German affair



AIRA COBRA
Coolest paint job



Gotcha! Another Brookie
Bints plane bites the
dust as my dog-fighting
skills improve



The old prop driven plane you start
the game with is pretty slow, but in
a dog-fight it'll prove invaluable
because you can out manoeuvre
faster, more modern jets like this



PROSCORE

GAME Wing Over
GENRE Flight Sim
SOFTWARE HOUSE JVC
CONTACT 0171 240 3121
RELEASE DATE Out Now
PRICE £44.99

A game with a premise as simple as Wing Over could very easily have been dull and uninspiring. In quite a daring move, JVC have seen fit to dispense with the usual stock of missions involved in a flight sim and have concentrated purely on dog-fighting. However, it looks as though the gamble has paid off; Wing Over's combination of excellent graphics and fast and furious gameplay makes playing it an addictive and hugely enjoyable experience. Unfortunately, a few minor flaws prevent Wing Over from becoming a classic game (a more polished standard of presentation, a few extra ground targets, and maybe a little more variety) but, having said that, this is still a good game.

BY HUGH POYNTON

GRAPHICS 9
SOUND 8
GAMEPLAY 8
LASTABILITY 8



ANDY It's good to see dog-fights which involve planes of yesteryear, as launching a missile from three miles away dulls the fun. Modern planes are also included to make this the most interesting flight sim to date

JAMES Wing Over seems a little too simplistic to offer any real longevity, however it is pretty good if you're just after good old air-to-air combat. Dog-fighters will enjoy it, but the rest should try before they buy

PAUL Going to disagree with old Hugh on this one. I really didn't like Wing Over at all. Maybe it's just me, but I think I'd rather have my teeth pulled by a one-armed blind man with no dental experience than play this

JAY Flight sims bore me shitless at the best of times and knobbing around in an old Spitfire worrying about your altitude does nothing for me whatsoever. Of course, plane buffs will love it to bits, but I think it sucks

Pandemonium 2

Remain calm! Do not adjust your TV set! Just sit back and prepare to take part in the quest for the 'Comet of Infinite Possibilities' – guaranteed pure pandemonium



▲ Picking up power-ups will enable Nicky to shoot enemies or enter a battle of wills courtesy of these beams of light. Lock on and take their life

Let's get one thing straight before we go any further, Pandemonium 2 is seriously weird shit. Either the guys making this game are heavily into some mind warping chemicals, or they're hoping that potential buyers may be the kind who suffer from severe acid flashbacks from time to time.

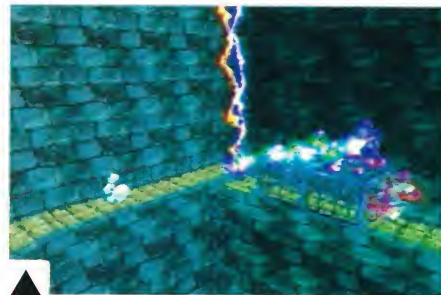
The return of Pandemonium to the PlayStation will surely be music to the ears of fans of the first game, which was a success due to its strange visuals, bizarre gameplay and manic background story, and fortunately Pandy 2 carries on the tradition.

Fargus and Nicky return for more adventures, this time on the trail of the Comet of Infinite

Possibilities, a magical celestial body with the power to change the fate of the world. Crystal Dynamics were understandably eager to keep the game along the same lines as the original, as it made a bit of a splash when it was released around Christmas '96. Some people found the mix of bright 3D levels and somewhat 2D gameplay disorienting, but ultimately the game proved to be an inventive approach to the traditional scrolling platform game, and a sequel was sure to follow.

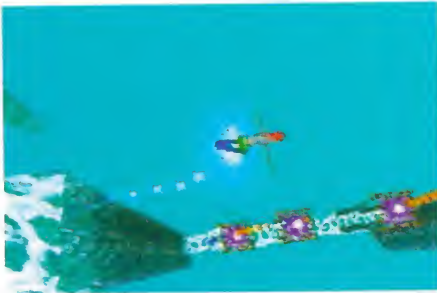
There have been a few changes to the Pandy stable since Xmas '96. Nicky has grown up and become a sexy spell-binding temptress with all her curves in the right places, whereas Fargus has fallen victim to his own crazed brain and is completely freaky as a result. The character of Nicky has developed into a more ravishing heroine to make her more appealing to both male and female players, and this cunning ploy will probably work in the favour of developer Crystal Dynamics. Thanks to Lara Croft, the portion of the male population that actually gets off on looking at pixels is sure to approve of Nicky's timely maturity. Those of you that appreciate something good to look at, but base your game purchases more on the quality of the game rather than how sexy the pixels look, will be more interested to hear about how the game plays, and I'll be coming to that very shortly.

First of all, let me say that Pandemonium 2 is a strange and feature full brew. The nature of



▲ The backgrounds are detailed throughout the adventure and the music really kicks in places





the game doesn't call for extremely sophisticated graphics. However, the designers have done a great job in making this new outing look extremely good. I've never seen such an intense range of psychedelic colours and backgrounds in one game, and the strange thing is, they're totally suited to Pandemonium 2. Indeed the anarchic Fargus and sultry Nicky are completely at home in the array of painfully bright environments. After all, they've both been through these strange narcotic jungles before, and dealt with the bizarre inhabitants who do their best to stop them from completing their magical quest.

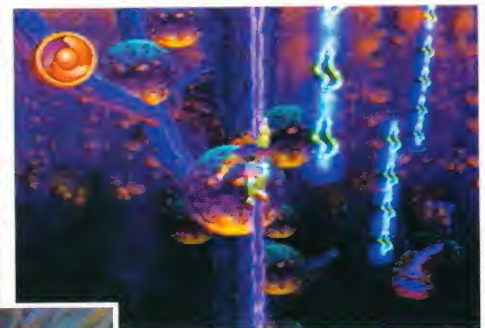
The original game, whilst being praised for its intriguing appearance and presentation, was criticised a little for the mechanics of the gameplay. It was presented as a 3D-style treat, but restricted players to a linear path system, and while Pandemonium 2 does offer the player opportunities to take different routes through some of the levels, ultimately it retains the linear feel of the first game. This isn't necessarily a bad thing. In fact the stylised side scrolling gameplay intertwined with the multi-layered landscapes and unusual camera



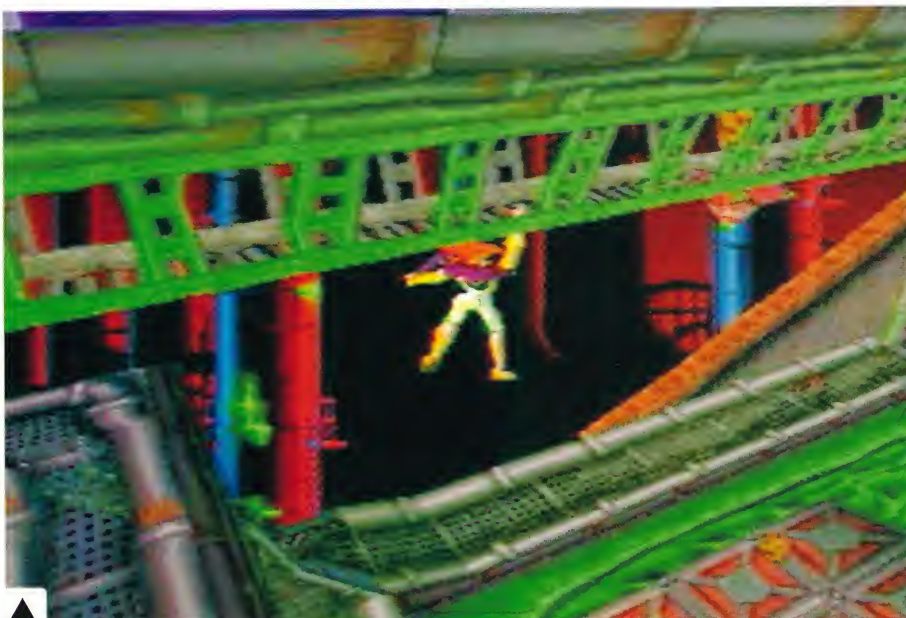
Collecting the tokens can increase your number of lives as well as lead to a bonus surfing level. Search everywhere in order to find them all



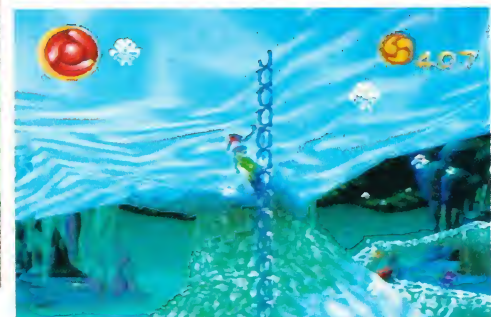
The flying, fire-breathing dragon is just one of the bosses which must be defeated if you're going to win the race for the comet and unleash its power



The 'Goon's come in all manner of forms and can be dispensed with by shooting them or jumping on them. Fargus can even inflate his enemies until they burst



Fargus and Nicky can climb ropes, hang from ledges and crawl along these overhead ladders to get past the obstacles in their path. Be prepared to fly, drive and float too if you want to go all the way



REVIEW



Pandemonium 2

► angles all work well together, and you'd be forgiven for believing that this was a 3D affair, more in keeping with the general trend of platform games at the moment. However, Pandemonium 2 isn't from the same stable as the likes of Croc and Crash Bandicoot, instead it keeps its own individuality. Crystal Dynamics have resisted the temptation to tinker with the make-up of the game under the wave of public addiction to free roaming, interactive environments, and have remained loyal to the unmistakable gameplay of the original.

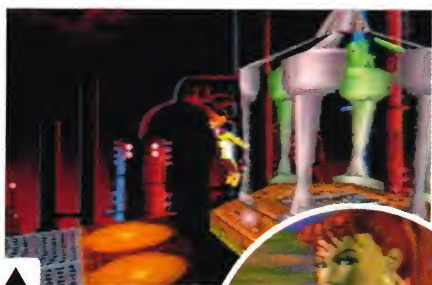
All this means that if you didn't like the first adventure, you probably won't be impressed with this either. Having said that, when Pandemonium first reared its mean profile, 3D free-roaming platformers were pretty thin on the ground, so it didn't really have a hard time winning admiration. In the end it came down to a straight contest between Pandemonium and a certain marsupial called Crash Bandicoot, with Crash perhaps just shading it. However, the battle for platformer of the year will be a little more intense around this festive season with both Croc and Jersey Devil, providing interesting three-dimensional opponents.

The strategy elements of the game are derived from traditional platform features of the past. Along their merry (if a little twisted) way, Fargus and Nicky can make use of their individual talents in order to progress. The

characters are both capable of completing all the levels, however, the differing attributes of the two comet seeking raiders are more suited to particular stages than others. You may want to take advantage of the various power-ups, sometimes situated where only Fargus with his directional assault weapon on a stick – Sid, or Nicky with her double jump, can reach, and you can swap between the two on the level select stage. Apart from dispensing with the Goons that stand between yourself and glory, the two adventurers will also have to run, jump, rope climb and ledge-hang to reach the source of their quest. Nicky and Fargus also get the chance to try their hands at piloting a heavily armoured tank and a mech-robot warrior suit, bringing new elements of gameplay with them.

As mentioned earlier, the manic Pandemonium 2 doesn't break ground with its graphical content, never-the-less the visuals are still interesting and eye-catchingly colourful. It's not uncommon to find yourself glancing into the background at every rest in the action to take in the full extent of the hypnotic environments. The high-res sequences at the beginning and end of the game are examples of what the developers are capable of. Blended with the unmistakable gameplay which, while being stylised and seemingly a little limited, is still capable of holding the interest, it all works quite well. However, its retro arcade appeal may be lost under the influx of complete 3D environment games that are also on their way.

Pandemonium 2 can definitely deliver a few punches and will probably sell quite well in the run up to Christmas, but I'm inclined to suggest that while fans of the original will be impressed, newcomers to the stylised Pandemonium may find it all a little too bizarre.



▲ A whole host of free floating platforms must be negotiated to get through the game. This is platform gaming in its purest form



◀ That's what all the fuss is about, The Comet of Infinite Possibilities. It won't be captured easily

After defeating this bizarre Buddha creature it gets really pissed off and loses its head



PROSCORE

GAME Pandemonium 2

GENRE Platform

SOFTWARE HOUSE BMG

CONTACT 0171 384 7774

RELEASE DATE Out Now

PRICE £44.99

Fans of the first Pandemonium will be keen to get to grips with Fargus and Nicky once again, and the reputation of the original should attract new PlayStation owners, eager to cast an eye over the sequel to a PSX classic. Pandemonium 2 won't take competent players a great deal of time to complete, but it can't fail to entice you with its cyber-hippy visual mix of psychedelic colours and sweeping camera angles. Ultimately, its success will be decided on its main strengths and weaknesses, both of which being the undoubtedly unusual way in which the game plays, and among the upcoming crop of 3D treats, Pandemonium 2 is going to have its work cut out for it.

BY JAMES CANNON

GRAPHICS 8

SOUND 7.5

GAMEPLAY 7.5

LASTABILITY 7



PAUL Sorry kids, I'm with Crash again. Admittedly the girl has a fine chest, but a furry arse does it for me every time. Another nice try, but at the end of the day there are better platform games out there

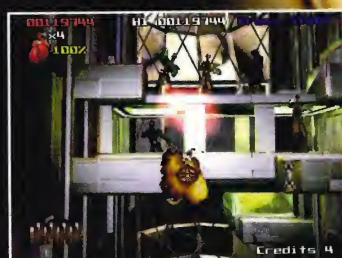
JAY Still a 2D platformer attempting to look 3D with fancy camera trickery and wacky psychedelic visuals. It is, however, an improvement on the original so if you favoured that instead of Crash, then buy this

ANDY Another bizarre eye-straining platformer which takes the original one step further. It's wild and more than a little frustrating to get through. But that's what platformers are all about

HUGH Despite Pandemonium 2's stunning, chemical ingestingly good graphics and frenetic gameplay, the fact that you don't have the freedom to explore the levels in true 3D proves something of a let-down

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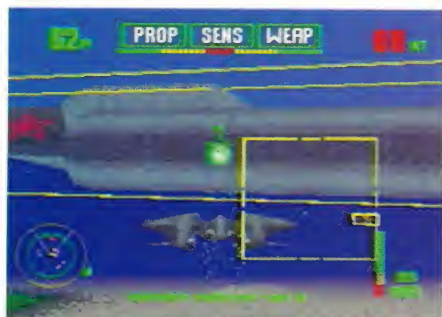


Tigershark

Excellent is a word which will play no further part in this review. It will soon become more than apparent why. This one should bury itself in the sand, never to be seen again



▲ The Tigershark is as nimble underwater as it is on the surface. But that isn't saying much



▲ You need to clear the seabed of these things to prevent the enemy from becoming even more powerful than they already are

I'm always suspicious when a boxed version of a game appears at the PlayStation Pro office. In the past, these games have always stunk like week-old kippers and it's reassuring to see my intuition is on form once again, since Tigershark fails to break this trend. The campaign promoting this has been as limp as Man City's strikers, and after one play and you'll understand why.

The reason for Tigershark failing isn't an isolated aspect such as slack gameplay, it seems to have been infected with rot all the way through the package. Every aspect of the game is a far cry from the high standards every PlayStation owner demands.

To be let down this spectacularly however, is in no way excusable. From the off it's difficult to find any kind of redeeming feature. It looks like the game has been put together in about half an hour and plays just as badly.

You take charge of Tigershark, a nimble but deadly vehicle both on top of and underneath the surface of the world's seas. Your missions are all briefed to you and, in order to progress, you must complete all your numerous objectives. Just as you would expect.

The only difference with this and other sea warfare games is that you can also do

battle underwater by dipping the nose of your Tigershark under the surface and blasting away at a whole host of sub-aqua enemies.

The main threat comes primarily from the Soviet Union. The Cold War is resurrected and continues to be a good excuse to make games. Another nation posing a threat to the entire stability of the human race are the Japanese (obviously,) and their units will also need destroying before the whole world falls into chaos. As you can see, the thought that has gone into Tigershark is less than impressive.

Controlling the machine through the levels is a straightforward affair. Pressing the R1 button to accelerate and the R2 button to decelerate is all it takes. You can also scroll through your weapons and use them as you wish until you finally run out of ammo. You have several types of weapon at your disposal, ranging from torpedoes to machine guns, and each one can be powered up by simply collecting weapon icons after destroying enemy crafts.

Graphically, Tigershark doesn't impress. It's hardly state-of-the-art and looks like it was put together in little next to no time. The ship itself is particularly blocky, as are the explosions and other enemies. In fact, the whole thing looks like a Lego kit. When you see the likes of Colony Wars or Tomb Raider, why would anybody want this? The answer is simple, they won't and it's small wonder.

The sound effects do



▼ Depth charges from the surface pose as much of a threat as torpedoes from submarines





actually vary as you submerge below the surface to huge muffled explosions, but this is the only reasonable effect in the entire game. The rest of the Tiger Shark sounds are terribly samey and fail to impress in any way.

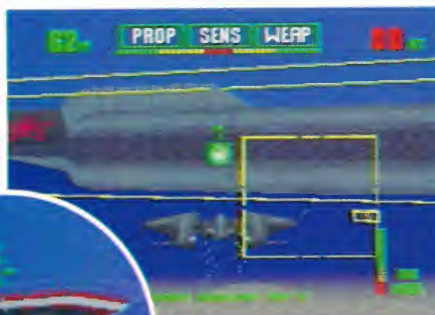
Variation is also something that doesn't feature strongly in Tigershark. You sail or travel underwater and blast a host of destroyers, submarines, gunboats and ground installations. This is all the game entails, and while you're struggling away trying to get your shots on target, the enemy have some impressive homing devices with which to wipe the sea bed with your vessel. While this is fine for a challenge, it soon becomes tedious, taking more and more direct hits while there's not much you can do about your increasingly desperate situation.

Your only chance of survival is to weave, slow down or speed up. In theory this is quite simple, but the sluggish acceleration and braking doesn't allow you a simple time. Players will soon bore of blasting the copious, bland and uninteresting enemies.

In the end, the enjoyment factor has been forgotten and the FMV sections, graphics and gameplay leave a lot to be desired. If you're wanting a little more for your money, take a closer look at some of this issue's other high quality releases such as G-Police or Colony Wars – these are games with clout in every department and are well worth the money.



Get those brakes on! You don't want to fly straight into this or you could end up in big trouble. And that wouldn't be good



The speedy gunboats don't take many hits. What they lack in armour they make up for in speed



A battleship slowly sinks to the seabed, giving you quite an impressive show

PROSCORE

GAME Tigershark
GENRE Shoot'em-up
SOFTWARE HOUSE GT Interactive
CONTACT 0171 285 3791
RELEASE DATE Out Now
PRICE £44.99

This is one to be avoided. From the outset it's on a loser. Its sloppy graphics and totally dull gameplay don't hold the attention for more than a few seconds. The idea of having an all-purpose sea vessel which can travel both underwater and on the surface, while inflicting death on numerous enemies is certainly a little different. The end result however, gives the impression it's been thrown together in half an hour. And that's just not good enough by today's standards. My interest was held for next to no time as it became apparent very early on that this was all that was on offer. The idea was intriguing, but the dreadful graphics and turgid gameplay let it down terribly.

BY ANDY SHARP

GRAPHICS 3

SOUND 5

GAMEPLAY 4

LASTABILITY 4



PAUL This really is a bit poor when all's said and done. I thought we were well past this stage. Tigershark is shoddy, bland and repetitive. Apart from that, everything's just great. Sorry, but this wasn't for me

JAY Oh dear, oh dear. This is about as exciting to play as a forced game of Scrabble with your Gran. It lacks almost everything needed in a game of this sort, namely frantic gameplay and high speed visuals. Avoid

HUGH Tigershark seems to be a game full of missed opportunities. The concept – a high speed, hi-tech killer sub shoot'em-up is certainly original, but it just turns out to be full of boring gameplay and crappy graphics

JAMES I have to agree with Hugh on this one, it's a nice idea that could've delivered so much more. Unfortunately, it is a let down in every department. Tigershark? Smells more like Tuna fish to me

NASCAR '98

Let's take a trip to Hicksville, USA and don't forget to put 'Achy Breaky Heart' on the car radio...



▲ You've been sucked into the pits to have vital repairs carried out on your car. Never mind, you still have 300 laps to catch up with the rest

Electronic Arts don't seem to release many new games anymore. Over the years it has created its brand and by God are they sticking to it. Look on the shelves of any computer store and count how many games have the figure '98 emblazoned across them. Quite a few aren't there? Most of them are EA's and as it continues to update its product line with annual regularity, you do have to wonder when the river will run dry.

Today's offering is NASCAR '98. Now in case you're unfamiliar with this sport, NASCAR is the American equivalent of Formula One. Basically, operating under the theory that 'if the world has a sport it quite likes, the Americans need something that they consider better,' comes the world of NASCAR racing. What we have here are high power saloon-style cars careering around concrete ovals for about 400 laps. Any kind of contact between vehicles tends to result in spectacular crashes with cars disintegrating against concrete walls at 180mph. Wouldn't catch me doing it, or anyone else for that matter if the financial rewards weren't so high.

Anyway, NASCAR '98 is yet another racing game for a console that is close to suffocating under the sheer weight of automobile drive-fests. At least NASCAR has some differences though.

The most amusing of which is the redneck country and western musical score. When the PlayStation pumps out its Rhinestone Cowboy cum Dukes of Hazard ditties, you'll find it real hard to focus all your attention on driving.

The problem I can see some racing gurus having here is that this is one of those games where you can only get a decent performance from your car if you can be bothered to set it up properly. You know the sort of thing, the gears, spoiler ratios, downforce and so on. This tends to leave most of us messing about for 10 laps or so before spinning the car around and seeing how many crashes you can cause by ploughing into the oncoming traffic.

If you can be bothered to retune your engine every five minutes, then chances are you're going to love this and maybe even, if you're careful, sustain a challenge on the championship circuits.

All the vehicles, drivers and vehicle decor is correct up to the start of last season, but I couldn't find Bo & Luke Duke anywhere, so I was gutted. My childhood dream of hairing along like a redneck in the General Lee with Daisy by my side remains unrealised.

As you race along you'll notice that your shiny car gets battered and bashed as you



▲ The steep embankments have to be taken with great care and precision or you'll find yourself sliding up towards the concrete and a crash





plough into the walls. This all affects performance and it won't be long before you require a visit to the pits. Now the Pits in NASCAR '98 seems to have an almost Star Trek quality about them. If your car goes even vaguely near the pit lane you'll be sucked in by some kind of mystical tractor beam and forced to have repairs done against your will. It's sort of like a backstreet garage in many ways.

This annoyance aside, whether you'll like NASCAR '98 comes down to your views on engine tuning. If you don't want to, or can't understand the theory, then you're destined for a long spell at the back of the race. But if you like stripping down your old Fiesta's engine at the weekends, then this game is for you.

Personally, although NASCAR '98 is well done, I prefer the pure racing challenge of TOCA Touring Car Championship from Codemasters. Same sort of thing, but without the sawdust and pitchfork mentality!



▲ **Bob Jenkins** is our friendly American commentator who leads us through the proceedings in true Murray Walker fashion



▲ As with all EA sports games, NASCAR '98 comes complete with action-packed FMV introduction sequence which really helps to set the scene



PROSCORE

GAME **Myst**

GENRE **Adventure**

SOFTWARE HOUSE **Psygnosis**

CONTACT **0151 282 3000**

RELEASE DATE **Out Now**

PRICE **£44.99**

There's no denying this is as polished a product as we've come to expect from EA, but its wider appeal is perhaps a little less certain. EA Sports are beginning to get a reputation for churning out their American games over here, but failing miserably when they try to produce a British game like football. NASCAR '98 is certainly a good game with plenty of potential for hours of play, but it's not the kind of game you can really pick up and play for 10 minutes before you leave to get your bus. If you like racing games then you've got plenty of choice, too much perhaps. There are definitely other games I'd go for ahead of this one, but if you're into NASCAR in a big way, at least take a look

BY PAUL MCNALLY

GRAPHICS **7.5**

SOUND **8**

GAMEPLAY **8**

LASTABILITY **7**

7 1/2

HUGH Although NASCAR '98 is an undeniably polished product, I can't help but think that it's just a little bland. Although similar in content to TOCA, this just doesn't provide the same level of gameplay

JAY No surprises here I'm afraid. This is just another driving sim released into an already overcrowded market, and unfortunately for EA, it doesn't offer anything new, either on the gameplay front or graphically. Shame

ANDY It's another stylish affair from the EA Sports series. As usual it's got plenty of options and plenty of gameplay, but it lacks a killer punch which would make this yet another classic sports sim from the States

JAMES I think Hugh's hit the nail right on the head with this one. As you would expect from an EA product it looks and plays well, but doesn't really offer a well stocked genre anything radically new or different

REVIEW

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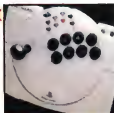
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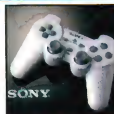
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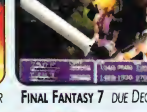
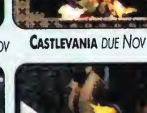
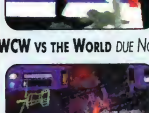


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Game	Release Date
ACE COMBAT 2	NOVEMBER
ACTUA SOCCER 2	14TH NOVEMBER
ACTUA TENNIS	DECEMBER
APACHE LONGBOW	DECEMBER
AUTO DESTRUCT	28TH DECEMBER
CASTLEVANIA	NOVEMBER
CLAYFIGHTER EXTREME	DECEMBER
CRASH BANDICOOT 2	DECEMBER
DISC WORLD 2	NOVEMBER
FIFA ROAD TO WORLD CUP	14TH NOVEMBER
FINAL FANTASY 7	NOVEMBER
HERC'S ADVENTURE	DECEMBER
KILLING TIME	NOVEMBER
LETHAL ENFORCERS 1 & 2	OCT/NOV
MAGIC THE GATHERING	NOVEMBER
MOTO RACER	14TH NOVEMBER
NASCAR '98	7TH NOVEMBER
PREMIER MANAGER '98	JANUARY '98
SCREAMER 2	NOVEMBER
TEST DRIVE 4	12TH DECEMBER
THE CRISIS	NOVEMBER
TOMB RAIDER 2	21ST NOVEMBER
TOURING CAR	21ST NOVEMBER
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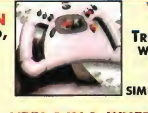
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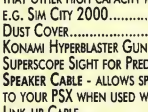
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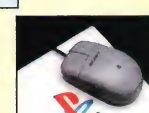
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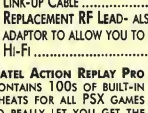
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Actua Soccer 2

The sound of turnstiles ratcheting around, the fragrance of freshly cut grass, the roar of the crowd, men against men in a gladiatorial arena. You can almost smell the Bovril



▲ The game is locked 0-0 and the Italians have got a penalty (by diving). Seaman isn't too worried, they don't like scoring against England do they?



Winter is fast approaching and another fair but dissatisfying summer has passed us by, along with the traditional yearly crop of Wimbledon strawberries and countless cricket tests arranged by old men who've still not cottoned on to the fact that it rains in England. Yes, the dark nights are finally with us and it's time to say goodbye to all things Persil white.

Yes, we're heading for trench warfare; men against men, the sound of leather on leather and the roar of 50,000 people echoing the inherent desire of every red-blooded testosterone pumped male for which failure is a soul destroying trip to gutted central, and success is the invigorating rush of pure adrenaline that accompanies a victory over sworn adversaries and their pitiful disciples.

In short, it's when everyone realises that Man United are threatening to walk the league again and 19 Premier League chairmen hear the sound of their arses dropping out. Allegiances aside, we can all look forward to being comforted through the winter months by the only sport that turns best friends into the most hated of enemies, the only sport that can invoke euphoria or despair, the only sport that really matters. That's right, table tennis. Shit, I meant football.

This Christmas season should be a mud-caked stocking full of dribbling soccer delights for football followers who require a less energetic way of taking part in the pastime of the working classes. And

thankfully, there's an influx of titles on their way in time to be included in Santa's sack. Already this issue we've seen Power Soccer 2's addition to the PlayStation squad and EA's FIFA: Road to World Cup '98 will be kicking off next month too, but it's the new signing from software house Gremlin that has been the reason for many a "flukey bastard" comment in the office over the last month.

Actua Soccer 2 is upon us, and it's bearing down on goal. When the original Actua was released, it set the standard for all next generation football games, being the first to master the use of motion-capture technology and incorporate polygon characters. Now with Actua Soccer 2, Gremlin are aiming to see the competition stretched off the playing field, and they've assembled a team that's more than capable of dribbling around the keeper and ramming the ball through the back of the net.

The line-up is headed by none other than England Captain Alan Shearer, who begins his role as Football Consultant to Gremlin with AS 2. Big Al has overseen the development of the game, doing his Geordie best to ensure that the realism levels never flounder, as well as checking that all in-game tactics and playing systems emulate their real-world counterparts.

He was originally drafted in to provide motion-capture too, but suffered an injury early on in the season.

Gremlin, in their infinite wisdom, had the feeling that eleven-a-





side crutch polo wouldn't have the same appeal as a new footy game, so they went about acquiring the services of Liverpool's latest scoring sensation and all-round superstar in the making, Michael Owen.

The motion-capture for the 'keepers comes courtesy of the safe hands of Sheffield United's Simon Tracey and it's all been carried out with some impressively realistic results. The game characters recreate the movements of kicking, heading etc. to great effect. The moves are carried out smoothly with players seemingly stroking the ball around, rather than trying to puncture it with their toe-caps. It's best appreciated during the excellent goal replays, perhaps the most realistic yet seen on a computer game. Every conceivable angle is covered so that you can really milk hitting a blinder past your current victim. During the replay the path of the ball is highlighted in the style of Sky Sport's magic Andy Gray's pen, with shot speed and distance included too.

Commentary will once again be handled by the more than capable Barry Davies, this time accompanied by his BBC colleague Trevor Brooking, who chips in with his own footballing pearls of wisdom and fence-sitting experience. The commentary is a definite improvement on the original game, as Barry's vocabulary has been enhanced to be more context sensitive. This means that there is an immediate



You can play at night or in the daytime in glorious sunshine, fog or snow on over 20 real world stadiums. Check out Old Trafford below



The keeper dives in vain as Andy coolly slots the ball past my 'keeper, the stuffy git! I'm telling you it was offside, the referee's a blind bastard!





Actua Soccer 2

► reference to what is happening on the pitch, even from the crowd who'll cheer if you get close to goal and then take the piss when you blaze over from six yards. It seems a little strange that Gremlin have opted to liven up this sequel by including the totally unexciting tones of Mr Brooking, but rather surprisingly the two work extremely well together and I'll even admit to listening out for Trev's own brand of soccer euphemisms with relish.

The game includes 64 current international sides with correct kits and line-ups as well as space for a further 24 custom teams, whose set-up can be controlled entirely by you. From team names to individual skin colour and to which foot is the stronger, you the player have been given ultimate control.

Once you've assigned names and kit colour, you'll be able to increase the skills of the players in your team by drawing from a skills 'bank.' The idea is to spread the talent around the team, but you can produce some of the world's deadliest strikers if you are intent on playing the game in the spirit of Keegan's ex-Toon army. You'll also be able to play with the awesome Shearer's all-star team, making the most of the legendary footballing skills from the likes of Pele, Platini and Gordon Banks.

Choose whether to play a full season or create your own between a few friends, including a few extra crappy teams for some hot shot practising, or you can enter into a cup. Each of the options can include all 64 teams or just two, providing you with a range of competitions that

you can practice your trade upon. There's even a practice option where you can take your team onto the training ground to get down those shooting techniques or set piece moves, enabling you to figure out the best way to catch the opposition napping with some sophisticated moves and inter-passing.

In the past, footy games have often proclaimed to be the definitive article, both in looks and playability, yet the vast majority fall way short of what is expected. This isn't the case with Actua 2. I didn't like the first game, the playing system was simple enough, but I

found it nearly impossible to score without playing the game for hours on end first. Actua Soccer 2 however, is instantly playable.

Only a couple of matches are required to ease you into the system, and I guarantee that it won't be long before you'll be capable of pulling off some absolutely spectacular strikes on goal.

It plays like a dream. It's fast, intuitive and responsive, yet simple enough to get to grips with so that it becomes second nature after only a few plays.

Football games come and go as often as bad teeny bopper girl power bands. Some look good and play like Jason Lee on dope, whereas some look like vomit, yet are relentlessly forced into games machines on a regular basis.

I suppose it all depends on what you want from a game like this and I'd rather have playability than looks any day, we all know that's what really matters, and the benchmark for such has always been the God-like Sensible Soccer on the Amiga. Here at last a game has arrived that can even rival that in terms of playability, and anything else for looks.



ON THE BALL



Ah, there they are! Good old Barry Davies and Match of the Day regular Trevor Brooking. They obviously had a lot of fun recording the commentary for Actua Soccer 2, but they remained committed to the job at hand, putting all their efforts into making the verbals sound as realistic and convincing as possible. The result is some of the best commentary ever heard on a footie game

PROSCORE

GAME Actua Soccer 2

GENRE Sports

SOFTWARE HOUSE Gremlin

CONTACT 0114 275 3423

RELEASE DATE Out now

PRICE £44.99

Actua Soccer 2 is the best football game that's been made for a long time. It doesn't have the range of Sensible World Of Soccer in terms of the management mode which that game offered, but amazingly it has at last been matched in every other department. Graphics continue to improve all the time and this looks about as real as you can get, yet soccer games have traditionally been poor simulations of the real thing. Not so with Actua 2. Gremlin have excelled themselves by improving the original in every department, and the result is the most playable football game yet to be seen on PlayStation to date, which will leave the competition as sick as a parrot.

BY JAMES CANNON

GRAPHICS 9

SOUND 9

GAMEPLAY 9

LASTABILITY 9



PAUL An absolute treat. Plays like a dream, looks fantastic. You can stick your N64 ISS Pro with it's ropey commentary, up yer arse mate. Actua 2 is such a vast improvement on PlayStation footy you just have to get it

JAY Better than the original, and much better than last year's 'update,' Actua 2 is simply awesome. From the graphics to the gameplay, it just looks the business and oozes playability from every pore. A corker

ANDY This is far and away the finest footie game yet for the PlayStation. It's fast and fun with all of the thrills and spills of modern football. It's got no competition as yet and I can't see any competitor on the horizon

HUGH Actua 2 looks like it's going to redefine the soccer game and provide footy fans with hours of unrivalled gaming. The graphics look excellent and the realistic commentary adds greatly to the atmosphere

YOU CAN RUN but you can't Hydra

An all-action adventure game featuring the voices of the stars,
clips from the film and, of course, you!



Disney's
ACTION GAME
FEATURING
HERCULES

UK



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Time Crisis

It's Miller time! No, don't crack open the pilsner lager just yet – we're talking about Richard Miller the biker jacketed firearms wizard and hero of Namco's new shoot'em-up

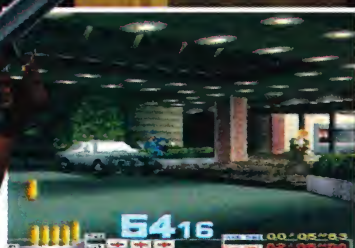
Even the worlds biggest videogame phobe must have seen it at some point. The rather funky looking arcade game that sits in the corner of a hundred and one bars and Firkin pubs up and down the country that usually has a sizable crowd gathered about it. There in the centre is a person, ducking and pumping away on a foot pedal like there's no tomorrow.

At long last Namco have decided to bring Time Crisis, the pub gamer's favourite, to the PlayStation complete with a gun the likes of which the console has never seen before. Right back to the days of Duck Hunt on the SNES, the light gun has been cursed by its tendency to drift about, thereby making your shooting about as easy as pissing against a force nine gale. Namco's G-Con 45 Time Crisis gun however, aims to remedy this by using the whole video output to provide an unrivalled level of accuracy.

But that's not the main selling point of Namco's latest gun 'n' game package. Obviously some bright spark at Namco realised that, in a real life gun fight situation, not many people actually just stand around like a lemon waiting to be shot – those with a decent sense of self preservation occasionally toy with the idea of taking cover behind something substantial (so as to avoid those nasty bullet things).

Namco have taken this into account and have included a cunning little button at the front of the G-Con to allow you to crouch behind crates, tables, cars and stairs or jump out from behind pillars and doors to avoid the worst of any firefight. Now you no longer have to waste valuable time shooting grenades and rockets before they hit you – instead just duck out of the way like any sensible person would.

So that's the special new funky bits out of the way, what's the rest of the game like?



Quick, shoot this pair before their mates arrive, or you get smashed on the head by a passing hook!





Bloody difficult would be quite an accurate description. Unlike Virtua Cop, Die Hard or any other light gun shoot'em-up you'd care to mention, all Time Crisis' action is up against a pretty stingy clock (strangely enough, you might have guessed as much from the title). Although you get additional time whenever you complete a level, you've got to waste everybody there first. So, take too much time ducking and hiding away like a girl and you won't complete the level in time, likewise race along like a mad man and take umpteen shots in the head and obviously, it's good night Vienna. It's all up to you to balance survival and with speed.

Graphically Time Crisis is an odd one – there's no denying the fact that unlike some recent high-res affairs such as Judge Dredd, Time Crisis looks a little more primitive. Although the graphics are still of a pretty high standard, there is an undeniably chunky and (in some parts, low-res) flavour to the visuals. Instead of everything being fully rendered, Time Crisis is, it has to be said, polygon city. Which, strange though it may sound, suits me down to the ground. You see, playing completely hi-res rendered shoot'em-ups such as Dredd (or the much poorer Max Force) often fails to give much of an impression of depth. Quite often it just feels as though your taking pot shots at a flat screen. Which is



something you couldn't accuse Time Crisis of – the playing environment, for all its polygons and garish colours comes across as being much more involving than in any other light-gun game.

Time Crisis also wins itself copious brownie points for the fact that the bad guys are so much more varied than in any other light-gun game. After a few minutes of playing you'll begin to realise that in the Time Crisis world at least, all men are not equal. The bog standard blue suited fellas are only any good at close range, whereas blokes bedecked in green or red are much handier in a ruck. This means that when you're in a seemingly untenable situation (this happens quite often) you'll be able to battle your way out of it by prioritising. Leave the wusses till later whilst you spend the first few seconds letting off copious rounds at your more accurate opponents.

And tasteless though it may sound, Time Crisis seems all the

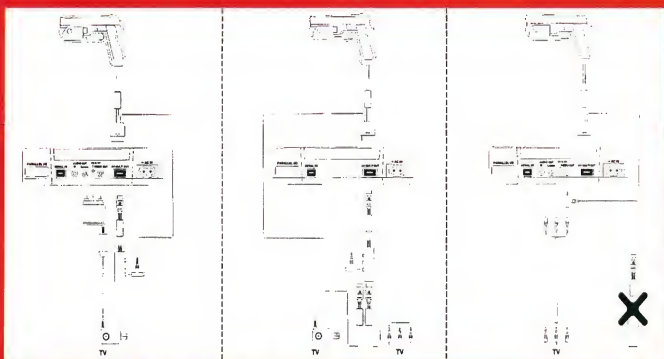


You've got to prioritise who to shoot first – in this case ignore the bloke blasting at you (he's crap), blast the guy in pink instead because he's an expert marksman



Blast these guys efficiently enough and you will gain access to a brilliant 007-style rocket control room

BOX CLEVER



Although you might not realise it, there are loads of different rear configurations to PlayStation. Depending on whether you've got a new console or an old one, you might well need the Time Crisis G-CON AV Adaptor (thankfully packaged with the game).

You see, the G-Con's accuracy comes from the fact that it uses the video output to work out where it is being pointed. The trouble is, there's nowhere to plug it in the Scart only PlatStations – hence this little fella





Whenever you see this whopping great 'danger' sign you'd better believe it. Within about two seconds you'll get your head blown off if you don't duck down



Time Crisis

► more real for the fact that shooting people isn't just a Dredd type affair where they just fall to the ground and disappear. In Time Crisis, each target will react differently depending on where you hit them - for example, shoot somebody in the shoulder and they will pin-wheel about like a spinning top.

You'll also have ample opportunity to blast the crap out of these characters. In addition to featuring the main coin-op storyline (break into an island stronghold until you've battled your way to the cell where the president's daughter is being held) there is a fairly lengthy special PlayStation-only level included in the game in which you have to battle your way through a huge hotel and destroy the weapons complex within it. This is pure class - any fan of the old

Die Hard light-gun section game will just love with this. Gunfights rage from behind lobby checkouts and grand pianos whilst Mercedes come careering through the lobby's plate glass windows. In short, this is pure undiluted destructive gameplay.

Which isn't to say it's immune from criticism (I have managed, after a long while, to scrape together three rather tenuous criticisms of Time Crisis). Firstly, it might have been fun to have a few screens, doors and boxes about to shoot. In both Dredd and Die Hard you can loose rounds off all over the place and cause some monumental explosions - this isn't the case in Time Crisis. Likewise, some sort of force



SUITS YOU SIR!



The leather jacketed fella is an ace shot so avoid at all costs



Beware of the Freddy Krueger bloke – one lash can be fatal



He's may be dressed in pink, but he's a mean sharp shooter



Blue suited man is a bit of a woofler really, not that scary at all



Give the Luxor hotel bell boys a tip – if somebody is shooting at you, you'd better duck!

Although these two blue suited bad guys may look like bad news, don't worry too much – the blue suits are actually rather naff shots



feedback, recoil rumble pack device on the G-Con could have added more to the game. Another minor beef is the fact that you can't pick up more guns or grenades. Part of the fun of a fair few light-gun games is being able to pick up dangerously high calibre weapons to satisfy your psychotic tendencies – not so in Time Crisis.

These are, however, minor gripes when it comes down to it, because Time Crisis is just about the best light-gun shoot'em-up you can get. The mix of lightning fast graphics, a previously unthought of freedom of movement and unrivalled accuracy of the gun all combine to make this a palm sweatingly addictive blast.



PROSCORE

GAME Time Crisis

GENRE Shoot'em-up

SOFTWARE HOUSE Namco

CONTACT 0171 911 5000

RELEASE DATE Out now

PRICE £44.99

What Namco have achieved here is a near perfect arcade conversion. Although the graphics have obviously been toned down a little for the home console and the gun adapted to work independently of the foot pedal, the game retains all the fast, furious and violently addictive fun of the coin-op. There's additional sections that you won't find in the arcade and the front 'duck' button seems like second nature after two minutes, even if you've been raised on the original. The gameplay is so sharp that you could cut yourself on it, and the tension reaches heart-bursting levels. And although £59.99 is a huge amount of cash to dish out for any game, Time Crisis is actually worth it.

BY HUGH POYNTON

GRAPHICS 8

SOUND 8

GAMEPLAY 9

LASTABILITY 8



PAUL So are Light-guns really where it's at? Regardless, this is a really fun game and the gun is so bloody accurate you actually have to point at the screen rather than off to the left somewhere. Cool stuff

JAY Brilliant stuff, admittedly. But how many times will you return to it once completed? Not many I'd wager, and therefore, although it's a classy title the longevity side of things has to be questioned. Give it a go though

ANDY With Judge Dredd also currently available, fans of frantic gun blasters are in for a treat. This is slightly better than Dredd for the reason that it's more playable and 10 times more frantic. Buy it

JAMES With the extras that the G-Con 45 gun supplies for ducking behind scenery, and the amazing accuracy, it makes for a game that's even more enjoyable than Judge Dredd. Time you took a shot from this

Street Fighter

Ex Plus Alpha

The Capcom crazy gang are back in town for another bout of fireball-related merriment, and this time they've finally caught up with the competition and gone all 3D on us



It had to happen really, didn't it? After years of countless sequels, prequels, spin-offs and add-ons, Capcom have finally given in to the pleas of the masses and have brought our favourite fighting family kicking and screaming into the wonderful world of 3D.

For years now fans of the beat'em-up genre were satisfied with plain old 2D scrapfests, which offered them the chance to pummel pixels and count the frames of animation with ease, but in the back of their minds, everyone secretly wondered what it would be like if this (a stonking fighting game of epic proportions) went 3D. Personally, I thought they would have done this many moons ago and I prayed for the likes of Street Fighter and its slightly uglier brother, Mortal Kombat, to 'get with it' and swap their pixels for polygons.

Well now I can relax, as not only is there an MK3D on the way, but Capcom have dragged the Street Fighter branding back out of the cupboard yet again and given it a complete overhaul. Polygons, rotating cameras, fancy graphics – the lot. Not only are the original eight combatants here to kick ass for the Lord, but they're joined by a new sparkling cast of selectable fist throwers, each one boasting a surreal link to the ongoing tale of murder, mystery and mayhem that seems to be a permanent resident of Shadaloo city.

I won't even bother try to catch up with the plot of the game, but needless to say, Bison is

throwing his weight around yet again and the usual band of merry men (and women) have descended on Shadaloo to beat each other to a bloody pulp over the infamous 'best of three' bouts we've all become accustomed to.

The new 'enhanced' offering is crammed with enough options, twists and hidden delights to satisfy the most hardened Street Fighter aficionado – arcade, versus, story and watch modes of play await, as do playable bosses, special moves, new characters, super combos, multi-juggle hits and numerous other things to amuse and entertain. And, as with previous incarnations, they all have that 'SF feel' which allows novices and experts alike a level pegging when embarking on their virgin mission into this previously unseen 3D Street Fighter world.

The original line-up still react and handle as they did all those years ago, which allows players to become comfortable with the game before being bombarded with the new stuff and have to start a whole new learning curve. And although the new characters take a while to get used to, perseverance will soon have you greeting them with the same affection as the others. Most of the instantly accessible moves require the same joypad manipulation of old and this helps out a great deal – let's face it, EVERYONE has played at least one of the Street Fighter titles before and will therefore have some competence with several of the characters and their respective moves. The ▶

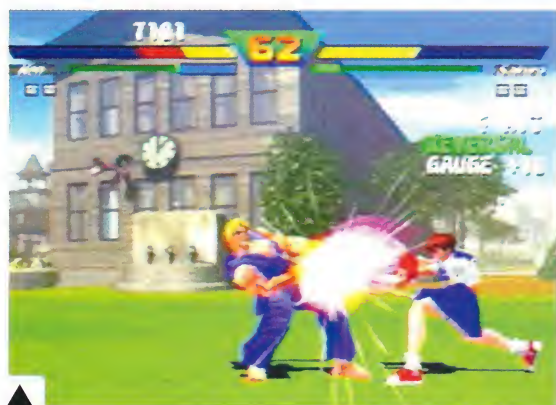


▲ Garuda begins to power-up for a massive attack on little Chun Li. Standing there covering her head won't do her any good against this onslaught



The Skullster wins yet another round. Try and suss out his special combos if you can, as every hit he makes goes straight in his opponent's bollocks. Great stuff!





▲ Ken feels the power of Sakura's flaming wrists of fury, unfortunately, right in his knackers. Recovery combo move the way? You betcha!

After a number of successful hits, your character will 'power up' for a final attack. Get it right and your foe is history



GENRE COMPARISON

Game Tekken 2
Software House Namco

Tekken 2 is arguably the best beat-'em-up currently available, and although it all looks nice and visually impressive the game itself is actually a 2D fighter – just like SF EX Plus Alpha. Camera trickery is the key with both titles, but Namco's finest hour just pips SF EX on detail

The Karate Kids

The Street Fighter family tree is a long and complex one. We all know that, so I won't even bother you with the in-bred technicalities of it all, but needless to say there has been a wide range of butt-kicking boys and girls joining in the bouts of fisticuffs over the years. No surprise then that this new EX Plus Alpha version offers you more selectable combatants than ever before; some of them old friends, some of them strangers. Read on for formal introductions to the characters on offer, plus a wad of their corresponding special moves await you too.

KEY:

U = UP
D = DOWN
F = FORWARD
B = BACK
K = KICK
P = PUNCH

CRACKER JACK



This guy was a crime organisation bodyguard who didn't like his job, so he got out and ended up getting involved in this bizarre tournament of fist-throwing fools. Apparently his 'crush a grape' special move is a killer.

Dash: Charge B, F + P
Dash Upper: B, F + K
Final Turn Punch: Hold 3P or 3K, release
Hero: B, DB, D, DF, F+P
Ball Kick: B, DB, D, DF, F+K

SUPER COMBOS:

Home run hero: D, DB, B, D, DB, B + P
Crazy Jack: B, F, B, F + P then P or K
Racing baffulo: Charge B, F, B, F + K

AKUMA



Akuma loves power. So much so that he has acquired the forbidden 'murder vibration' move in order to become the hardest bloke on earth.

Fireball 1: D, DF, F + P
Fireball 2: F, DF, D, DB, B+P
Airball: Jump, D, DF, F + P
Dragon Punch: F, D, DF + P
Hurricane Kick: D, DB, B+K
Warp: B, D, DB (F, D, DF+3K)
Roll: D, DB, B + P

SUPER COMBOS:

Messatsu fireball: D, DB, B, D, DB, B + P
Messatsu uppercut: D, DF, F, D, DF, F + P
Air slash: Jump, D, DF, F, D, DF, F + P
Instant hell: Jab, Jab, F, Short, Fierce

M. BISON



The Shadaloo shithouse is back for some more mayhem and he's still trying to create his own little private utopia. We've heard it all before to be honest, and despite his awesome powers and magical abilities, he still needs a proper kicking off someone. Interested?

Psycho Crush: Charge B, F + P
Knee Press: Charge B, F + K
Head Press: Charge D, U + K
Somersault Skull Diver: Charge D, U + P, P
Bison Warp: B, D, DB or F, D, DF + 3K or 3P

SUPER COMBOS:

Knee press nightmare: Charge B, F, B, F + K
Psycho shot: Charge B, F, B, F + hold P

CHUN LI



The original Sporty Spice Girl makes a welcome return to the fighting arena, complete with her rapid-fire ankles, spinning bird-kicks and frilly knickers. She's still as cute as she ever was and she's still on the lookout for her old dad too. Her latest clues lead her to Bison's Shadaloo HQ, where of course, trouble lies in wait for sure.

Spinning Bird Kick: D, DF, F + K
Flying Swallow Kick: D, DB, B + K
Lightning Kick: tap K

SUPER COMBOS:

Kikoshou: D, DF, F, D, DF, F+P
Sennet Sukyaku: D, DF, F, D, DF, F + K

KEN

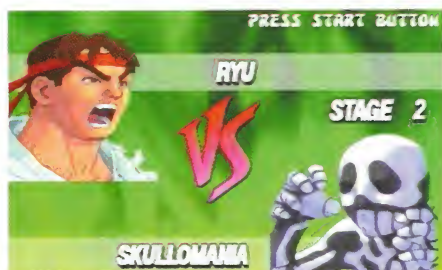


Ryu's old buddy and sometimes arch rival turned his back on fighting when he fell in love for the first time. Ryu took him down the pub and several pints later, Ken was up to his old tricks, fire-punching his way to the bar and screaming incoherently about women being more trouble than they're worth. Good lad.

Fireball: D, DF, F + P
Hurricane Kick: D, DB, B+K
Dragon Punch: F, D, DF + P
Ground Roll: D, DB, B + P

SUPER COMBOS:

Shoryureppa: D, DF, F, D, DF, F + P
Shinryuken: D, DF, F, D, DF, F + K

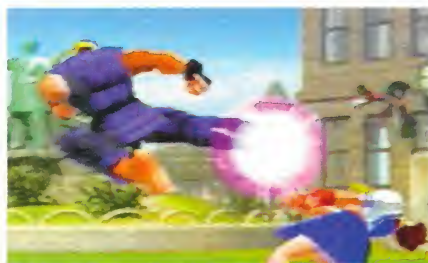


The camera angles move dramatically depending on the action. Close-up attacks prompt wild swinging visuals so you get the best view



► more you play, of course, the more is revealed. New twists on old moves and combinations look stunning in 3D and you're constantly being surprised with flashy camera angles and mind-boggling fresh special moves.

Huge retina-blistering explosions signal the inevitable arrival of one the game's many superb finishing move displays (if you win with a super-combo the globe will erupt behind you for example) which admittedly look bloody awesome, but the general feel is that this is still Street Fighter, but in a fancy dress and plastered in inch-thick makeup.



So have Capcom turned the SF branding into a heavily made-up slapper out to get all the cash she can from corruptible young men? Well yes and no really. She may be an old dog, but we love her. She looks attractive enough, you're guaranteed to see everything on your first date and there's no feeling lost when you don't play with her for a while, as you know when you return, she'll be up to her old tricks again the moment you turn her on.

Now this can be a good thing or a very bad thing, depending on how big a fan you are really. If you can't bear to be without the latest addition to this tried-and-tested series, then obviously you'll love it. In fact you're probably drooling as you read this. In fact you're probably not even reading this as you're half way to the shops, cash in hand. But, if you are sick to the back teeth of Ryu, Ken and good old Chunners, then this latest revamp may seem like the Capcom are hacking away at the bottom of the barrel of new ideas instead of doing something original.

Their current trend of creating ground-breaking new titles has gone out the window here, they've simply reworked something they know is going to



GUILE



Bart Simpson owes his trademark haircut to this bloke. Guile was a top notch military ass-kicker (a major, in fact) until that evil bastard Bison knocked off his best mate. Annoyed and infuriated, Guile left the army, his wife and his little daughter to go off after Bison to avenge his chum's death and has been involved in the Street Fighter series ever since. His flashkicks are a speciality. Watch out!

Sonic Boom: Charge B, F + P
Flash Kick: Charge D, U + K

SUPER COMBOS:
Opening gun bit: Charge B, F, B, F + P
Double flash kick: Charge BD, FD, BD, U + K



D.DARK



A Special Forces big boy working under Guile's command, Mr Dark and his unit were sadly on the receiving end of some heavy fire, and as a result, everyone in his group was slaughtered. All except him. The following shame of the event played tricks with his mind and he soon went bonkers, escaped from the hospital and disappeared into the darkness. Nice one Derek D.

Dark Wire: D, DF, F + P then F + P or P
EX-plosive: D, DF, F + K
Kill Blade: F, D, DF + P

SUPER COMBOS:
Kill Trump: D, DF, F, D, DF, F + P
Dark shake: D, DF, F, D, DF, F + K



SAKURA



A giddy school girl who has found herself entangled in this whole nasty mess, purely because she had the hots for one of the fighters in the tournament. She's spent the last few months running after the mysterious man with her heart all aflutter, scrawling 'Sakura Loves ?' all over Shadaloo toilet cubicle walls.

Hado-Ken: D, DF, F + P
Shouou-Ken: F, D, DF, F + P
Shunpu-Kyaku: D, DB, B + K

SUPER COMBOS:
Shinku-hado-ken: D, DF, F, D, DF, F + P
Midare-sakura: D, DF, F, D, DF + K
Haru Ichiban: D, DB, B, D, DB, B + K
Shungoku-satsu: LP + LP, F, LK + HP



DHALSIM



Often referred to in SF circles as Handy Bendy Ghandi, Dhalsim has the bizarre ability to morph his limbs at will. How? Because he's the incarnation of Agni the God of Fire of course! The reason for his involvement is that he's allegedly 'fighting for the sake of a people stricken by disease.' How he's going to help them by beating people to a bloody pulp has yet to be explained by his agent.

Yoga Fire: D, DF, F + P
Yoga Flame: D, DB, B + P
Yoga Blast: D, DB, B + K

SUPER COMBOS:
Yoga Inmeferno: D, DF, F, D, DF, F + P
Yoga drill kick: D, DF, F, D, DF, F + K (in the air)
Yoga Iedgend: D, DB, B, D, DB, B + K



GARUDA



Ignore the rumours, as Garuda is neither a man, nor a demon-giant. He is, instead, a super-strength volatile mix of people obsessed with murder. A sort of Mickey and Mallory Knox combined, if you will. With bad hair. His moves tend to look slightly similar to old character Blanka's, although as the green-skinned freak isn't here himself, I don't suppose it matters much.

Kizan: F, D, DF + P
Zyazan: B, D, DB + P
Shuuga: D, DF, F + P
Gouga: B, DB, D, DF, F + K

SUPER COMBOS:
Kienbu: D, DB, B, D, DB, B + P (air)
Super 2: D, DF, F, D, DF, F + P



sell, as EA do on a yearly basis with the bulk of their titles. And that, I'm afraid, really gets on my tits. Now don't get me wrong, I love Street Fighter, but a) they should have done all this 3D business a good while ago, and b) it isn't all that much of an improvement anyway. So what if they've swapped sprites for polygons? Who really gives a shit?

It's the gameplay that counts at the end of the day, and that, unfortunately, is where Capcom kick me in the bollocks and tell me to sit down and shut up. The signature SF gameplay has unsurprisingly made the transition into 3D perfectly (damn those developers) and so despite it being an uninspired creation designed to line the pockets of the Capcom fat cats, it does actually play like a dream. And a wet one at that.

The 3D angle may attract the more younger gamers of the globe who are used to the likes of Tekken 2 and who look on confused whenever Way Of The Exploding Fist is mentioned in conversation, but those of you who have 'been there, done that' with Street Fighter may share the above view point. It is, quite simply, just



As ever, each character has a dazzling array of new and special moves to master. Each one designed to blow your mind



Zangief demonstrates his special 'I had a curry last night' move to an unsurprisingly empty street



HOKUTO



Searching for her missing brother, Hokuto has spent many years training in the ancient art of Jujitsu. Now mastered, she has begun blending her own special techniques with her amazing ancient self defence skills to produce a devastating combination of the two. Watch out for this one, she's a tough cookie!

Chuugekhou: D, DF, F + P
then D, DF, F + P
Shinnkuugeki: D, DB, B + P
then D, DB, B + P or K
Shinnkyakugeki: D, DB, B + K
then D, DB, B + P or K
Gokyakukou: B, D, BD + P
Ryusi: B, F, DF, D, DB, B + P

SUPER COMBOS:

Kieki: D, DB, B, D, DB, B + P
Kyakuhougi: D, DB, B, D, DB, B + K

RYU



This guy is the man. He's been hammering opponenet's skulls since the SF series began and constantly roams the globe in search of his 'true strength'. The skills he's acquired over the years means that Ryu is now more powerful than his original master and is therefore surely the hot contender for the tournament, especially with his devastating fireballs and deadly uppercuts of doom.

Fireball: D, DF, F + P
Hurricane Kick: D, DB, B + K
Dragon Punch: F, D, DF + P

SUPER COMBOS:

Shinkuu hadoken: D, DF, F, D, DF, F + P
Shinkuku: D, DB, B, D, DB, B + K (air)

SKULLOMANIA



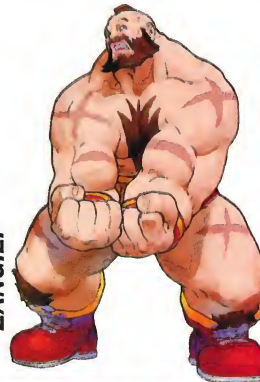
Apparently dressed this way due to his job at a comic book fair, the Skullster had something explode inside him, turning him into a butt kicking, ball crushing dude.

SkulloCrasher: D, DF, F + P
SkulloSlider: D, DF, F + K
SkulloHead: F, D, DF + P
SkulloDive: B, D, DB + P
SkulloCatch: B, D, DB + K
SkulloDash: F, F
SkulloBackflip: B, B
Taunt: 360 + P

SUPER COMBOS:

Super skullocrasher: D, DF, F, D, DF, F + P
Super skulloslider: D, DF, F, D, DF, F + K
Skullo dream: Jab, Jab, F, Short, Fierce
Skullo dream final: Jab, Jab, F, Short, Fierce, hold Short + Forward, D, B, F, F, D, BL

ZANGIEF



The big fat vodka-swilling Russian wrestler makes a welcome return to the tournament as no-one back home can stand up to his mighty strength and awesome rib-crushing bearhugs. Bizarrely, the WWF haven't been in contact with him as yet, so he's more than happy doing yet another season at Bison's holiday camp for the rock hard. And yes, he's still as slow as he ever was.

Spinning Clothesline: 3P
Spinning Clothesline 2: 3K
Spinning Pile Driver: 360 + P
Siberian Suplex: 360 + K

SUPER COMBOS:

Atomic buster: 720 + P
Super stone pike: D, DF, F, D, DF, F + K, to cancel D, DB, B + K

KAIRI



Bit of a weird one this. Kairi, it seems has lost his marbles. He can't remember who he is, why he's doing what he's doing or his cash card pin number. Wandering around picking fights with strangers (let's face it, everyone's a stranger to him) seems to be his only goal in life and lucky for him, he's wandered into the right part of town.

Shinkihatsudou: D, DF, F+P
Mouryuukasen: D, DB, B+K
Maryuunetkou: F, D, DF + P
SUPER COMBOS:
Sairoukyoushu: D, DB, B, D, DB, B + P
Shinkihatsudou: Jump, D, DF, F, D, DF, F + P
Kyoujyanenbu: Jab, Jab, F, Short, Fierce
Super 4: Jump, D, DF, F, D, DF, F + 2K



SF EX Plus Alpha

▶ another branch on the constantly updating Street Fighter family tree.

There's not all that much new to talk about apart from the swish visuals (unless you want to spout endless paragraphs of nonsense about super multi combos, special moves and the joys of guard blocking. Which I don't), so I think it's fair to say that although the addictive gameplay is up to its usual standard and the game on a whole is immensely playable as well as enjoyable, Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha should be approached with caution. All is not as it may seem.



BLAIR



Young Tony rose to fame when... oh, hang on. Wrong one. Ahem, this millionaire's daughter was oddly trained in hand-to-hand combat since she was a little girl instead of the usual spoilt brat pastimes of buying clothes, talking posh and generally being an airhead. A pal of hers suggested she travelled the world, and so she did, complete with chum and bodyguard. And that's why she's here.

Lightning Knee: F, D, DF + K
Shoot Kick: D, DB, B + P, D, DB, B + K, D, DB, B + K
Shoot Upper: F, D, DF + P
Sliding Arrow: D, DF, F + K

SUPER COMBOS:
Mirage combo: D, DF, F, D, DF, F + P
Spinside shoot: D, DF, F, D, DF, F + K

ALLEN



This guy is supposedly the toughest African Karate Champ around, despite the fact that he got the crap beat out of him in the first round. Ken was the bloke who kicked his butt, and swiftly told Allen that he needed to 'expand his life.' Beaten, pissed off and utterly humiliated, Allen set off around the globe to get his head together and become a stronger fighter to boot.

Soul Force: D, DF, F + P
Justice Fist: B, D, DB + P
Raising Dragon: F, D, DF + P
Uotsushiya: F, DF, D, DB, B + K

SUPER COMBOS:
Fire force: D, DF, F, D, DF, F + P
Drill break: D, DF, F, D, DF, F + K



In the world of illegal wrestling competitions run by millionaires, Darun kicked ass. Unfortunately, his cash-oriented bosses wouldn't let the poor bloke fight outside of their tournaments, so he got off on his toes and now spends his time looking after a certain rich bloke's young girlie, plus he's managed to blag his way into the tournament too. Good work fella!

Lariat: F, D, DF + P
Ganjisu DDT: F, D, DF + K
Plafuma Bomb: 360 + P
Indora Hashi: 360 + K
Darun Catch: B, D, BD + P

SUPER COMBOS:
Tasogane lariat: D, DF, F, D, DF, F + P
Indora hashi: D, DB, B, D, DB, B + K
Sukishin bomb: 720 + P



What is this? Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous? Pullum is yet another bloody millionaire's daughter with more time on her hands than David Pleat, and so one day she was mooching around the family mansion when she decided to check out her Grandpa's room. Inside she discovered that her dear old 'Gramps' had turned to the dark side and so she set off in search of the mysterious powers of Shadaloo and the evil M Bison.

Purim Kick: F, D, DF + K
Ten'el Kick: D, DB, B + K
Drill Purus: D, DF, F + hold K (air)

SUPER COMBOS:
Res al khana: D, DF, F, D, DF, F + K
Puraekh ra'am: D, DB, B, D, DB, B + K (air)

PROSCORE

GAME Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha

GENRE Beat'em-up

SOFTWARE HOUSE Capcom

CONTACT 0171 368 2255

RELEASE DATE Out Now

PRICE £39.99

PLAYSTATION APPROVED Mutton dressed as lamb, or a feisty

young tart who's just out for a bit of harmless fun? Whatever your viewpoint, this is basically everything you ever wanted from a Street Fighter game, all in one neat little polygonned package. And although the moral aesthetics may be a little dodgy, it still plays like the butt-kicking bastard son of Beelzebub and will have your fingers in tatters before the night's out. Just don't expect anything out of the ordinary though, as this is purely a 3D make over of an all-time classic fighting game. Nothing more, nothing less. Which, when you think about the possibilities, is a shame. Bah humbug.

BY JAY SHARPLES

GRAPHICS 8

SOUND 8

GAMEPLAY 9

LASTABILITY 9



PAUL Just as playable as it ever was and now it looks even better too. Street Fighter always has been the king of beat'em-ups and this latest version merely underlines it. Get your mates round and have a laugh

HUGH Excellent, this is really the mutt's nuts. I loved the original versions years ago and completely shat myself when I saw this update. This is the best scrapping fun I've had since Tekken 2. Great stuff. Excellent

ANDY Quite why this has taken so long to be given the full 3D treatment is a modern mystery. Apart from this the game remains exactly as it has been for the last zillion years. So that can't be too bad

JAMES I've always liked the Street Fighter characters but have never felt that the flat 2D format did the game justice. This new version changes all of that. Polygons, 3D rotation and loads of new moves. It's treat

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NINTENDO⁶⁴



You Are Bond James Bond



GOLDENEYE™ 007

You direct the action. Shot...by Shot!

Now pay attention 007, there's a lot of detail in this one. Thirty different means of assassination, twenty missions, the best gadgetry and more of your old enemies in the DeathMatch section than Moneypenney could shake a stick at. Now this device is optional but sure to come in useful, it's just come back from successful tests in the Lylat Wars.

They call it a Rumble Pak and it lets you feel the recoil of any of your favourite weapons right in the palm of your hand. Remember 007, the destiny of the free world hangs in the balance so do make sure you use that analogue controller of yours, I really don't know how we ever managed with those old digital ones. Oh, and do be careful 007.

"The most realistic and intense video game based on a movie ever" ⁶⁴ EXTREME "Sheer unadulterated Bond brilliance. You cannot buy better" ^{N64} MAGAZINE

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THE FASTEST MOST POWERFUL GAMES CONSOLE ON EARTH

5/5
C&VG

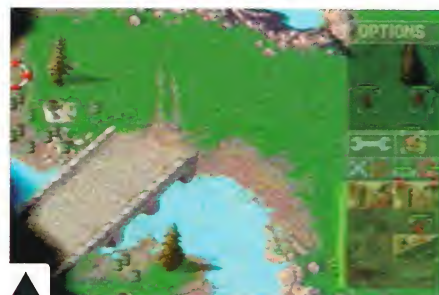
C&C: Red Alert

No it's not a Ginger Spice warning, it's Westwood Studio's Commie blasting follow-up to their best-selling strategy game, *Command & Conquer*

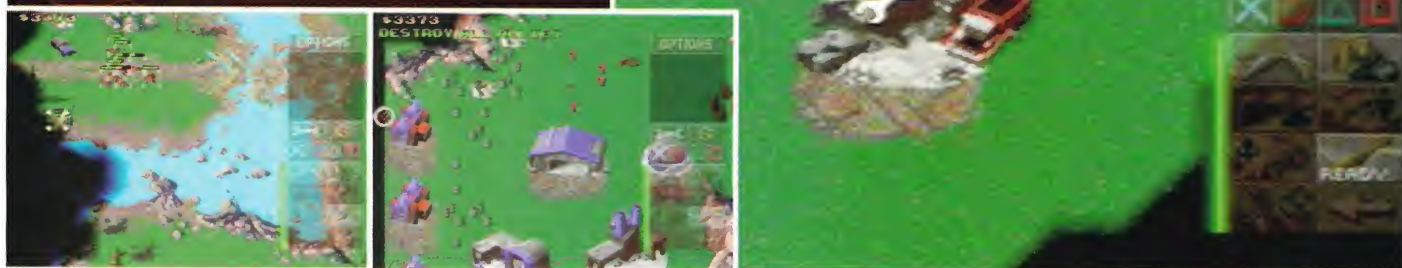


Take the most successful game on the PC ever released in Europe. Now set a bunch of programmers the task of turning a mouse-based game for a personal computer into a joystick game for a console and cross your fingers. Sit back and wait before being relieved when the PlayStation version of *Command & Conquer* is completed and it's bloody marvellous. Of course the control took a little getting used to, especially if you'd grown up with the PC version, but after a while, when the control became more intuitive, you found things became second nature, and then your real enjoyment of the game began.

Anyway, *Command & Conquer* is now old news and it's time for the latest instalment in the saga, *Red Alert*. Already released to massive critical acclaim on the PC, we even made it our in-demand cover game last month when we brought you the world exclusive preview. We were the first magazine to play it and we could tell



Red Alert takes C&C that one step further, providing better missions, more vehicles and better opposition. What more do you want?





even at that stage that it matched and in many ways surpassed its older brother.

Now we have a review version sitting on our desk, we are pleased to report that nothing terrible has happened in the interim. If you played the original C&C and loved it, which most people who saw it did, then you're positively going to cream over this.

Now before you point your accusatory finger at me and suggest that it's just more of the same (an accusation that seems to be fired at a lot of PlayStation games of late), it's only fair to say that while Red Alert is more or less Command & Conquer, the scenario has been changed drastically. There are now a whole host of new buildings and units to play with and the new cut scenes are as brilliant as ever.

If you read last month's exclusive you'll be all clued up on the ins and outs of the new plot. If not though you'll be dying to know what it's all about.

Red Alert is the prequel to Command & Conquer and actually alters history a little to achieve this. History according to Westwood Studios, the developers, never saw Adolf Hitler's meteoric rise



to power and instead saw Joseph Stalin's Soviet empire grow into a world-threatening superpower that began invading the rest of Europe.

As with the original Command & Conquer you can choose to start the battle from either side, ie you can continue the Soviet surge into Europe or try to repel the attack by taking charge of the Allies. Two CDs are included and simply inserting the CD of your choice will give you the set of missions appropriate to play either as the goodies or the baddies (excluding Bill Oddie).

Another key change in the storyline concerns the mysterious Tiberium mineral that was mined in abundance in C&C. Tiberium was the source of finance in the original game after a mysterious meteor shower rained down on the planet. In Red Alert the Tiberium hasn't arrived yet, so this is one less resource to have to worry

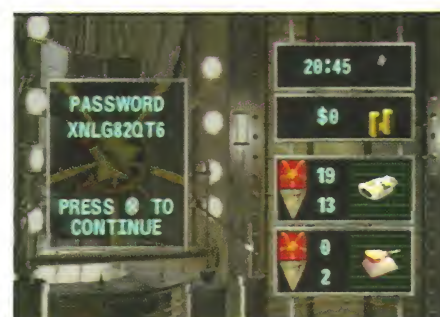
about. Nor have the warring factions been formed. The GDI haven't yet been created and the

Brotherhood of Nod (the bad guys in the original) are just lurking in the background.

The plotline progresses in such a way that we see how these groups first come into being, therefore clearing up any questions we may have left over from



Wonderful FMV sequences intersperse the missions, providing valuable clues and also linking the story together



The terrain plays a big role in Command & Conquer: Red Alert. Troop movement is affected by what is in their way and should be taken into consideration when moving your guys about



C&C: Red Alert

► C&C. All cleverly written stuff.

Now we mentioned right at the beginning that on the PC, C&C Red Alert is a mouse-based game and, while you can use a PlayStation mouse to perhaps get the most out of the experience, for the majority of people this isn't going to be an option. Using the controller in the original C&C was extremely easy, but even this has been tightened up and made more user-friendly for this sequel. Dragging a box over your units involves simply holding the shoulder button down on your pad and moving the cursor. What could be simpler?

Once a selection has been made, a destination can be chosen that will send your tiny troops off to follow your orders engaging any enemy soldiers or vehicles they encounter along the way. In addition, you can now set way points for them to visit on the way, to make it simpler for you to leave them alone for longer so your can get on with something else.

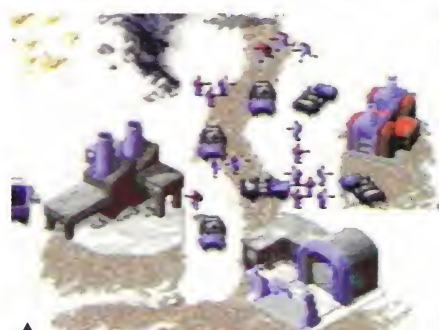
As far as new features go, Red Alert is packed to the brim with over 30 new game elements. One of the biggest new additions is the arrival of naval units, so now the battle can be fought across land, air and sea. This presents a whole new array of tactical problems which you have to face up to as you can now effectively be attacked from all sides and angles. Old tactics like shoring up your base against the beach, knowing that you have protection from that side, is now rendered almost useless.

There can be no denying that Westwood Studios have come up with the goods yet again. They've taken their original smash hit and improved it to make it one of the most eagerly-awaited follow-ups in a long time.

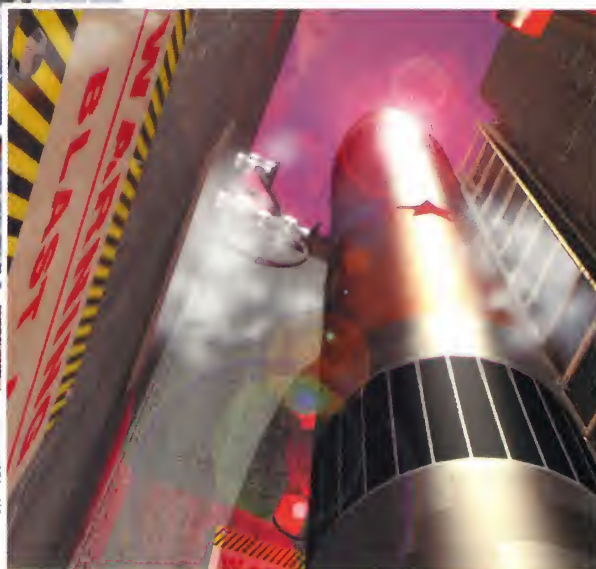
The one point that received the most criticism in the original Command & Conquer was the Artificial Intelligence. After a while it was easy to predict the patterns that your enemy would move in and adjust your tactics accordingly. Westwood gloat that none of the strategies you used in the original will work in Red Alert, and if you try them you're just going to end up getting wasted. You



▲ This looks like a good site to build a base as it is quite well protected on two sides. It's extra planning like this that will make winning easier

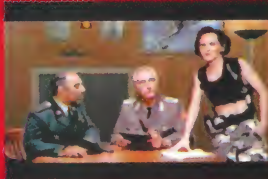


▲ The icy Siberian wastes are certainly hostile territory for all but the most hardy of troops. And they tend to be Soviets!

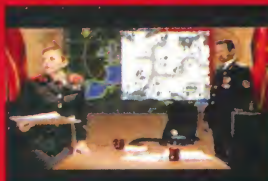




THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY



Red Alert allows you to play as either the good guys or the bad guys in this battle for total domination. Thankfully, both sides contain a pretty young lady giving mission briefings so there are no aesthetic differences between the two. The choice of missions varies greatly though, with the Soviet tasks tending to be much harsher and involve killing lots of innocent people



can fully expect your enemy to adapt constantly as the game progresses which has to be a good thing, even though it makes things more difficult in terms of completing the game.

To sum up then, there is no doubting Red Alert's pedigree and quality in terms of gameplay and graphics. Real-time strategy games may be a bit much for everyone, but if you even contemplated buying the original Command & Conquer then this should definitely be worthy of your attention.

The aircraft factory allows to take the battle into the skies, providing vehicles to give your troops vital air support



PROSCORE

GAME C&C: Red Alert

GENRE Strategy

SOFTWARE HOUSE Virgin

CONTACT 0171 368 2255

RELEASE DATE Out now

PRICE £44.99

PLAYSTATION APPROVED I liked Red Alert back in its PC

incarnation, so I was waiting for the PlayStation version to see how the translation had fared across formats. Thankfully, Westwood have done well. They've taken a complicated game and changed the control system so that it now fits neatly into the PlayStation-stylee. Red Alert is fast, frantic and never lets up. I'd have preferred to be able to save to a memory card rather than having to write down passwords for levels, but you can't have everything. I hope you're loaded this month because if you want all the best games you're going to have to start going out with a Spice Girl. Now there's an idea!

BY PAUL MCNALLY

GRAPHICS 8

SOUND 8

GAMEPLAY 9

LASTABILITY 9



HUGH War. What is it good for? Well not much, but in C&C at least it does make for a fascinating and involving strategy game that even those who normally overlook such mentally demanding fare will enjoy

JAY I loved the original to bits and this perfectly converted prequel will have me locked indoors for many months to come. Who needs trivial things like sunlight, food and social interaction when you've got this?

ANDY The original is still as popular as ever and a sequel can only keep the interest up. It's a great improvement with more varied missions and objectives to fulfil. Strategy games don't come any better than this

JAMES The title says it all really; Command and Conquer, and you must do just that. Strategy, death and annihilation rarely comes in a package as polished as this. However, it's definitely for strategy lovers only

REVIEW

Colony Wars

"It was a time for war. The Earth's dying, and its Empire is pirating resources from the colonies." Sounds like an excuse for a good old fashioned ruck



And traitorous dogs they are, heading for that awesomely huge battle platform. Lock on and take them all down before the warp hole closes



Stop. Before you read any further, find a cushioned upholstery, safe in its embrace. Treat yourself to a steaming cup of hot chocolate, and raid the fridge and cupboards of all sugar rich foods. Enjoy, relax, and take a second to contemplate the finer things about living on this resourceful and productive planet that we call home. Look through the window and admire the landscape, the vegetation and the abundance of wildlife, a reminder of the beauty of the planet, and how privileged we are to be here.

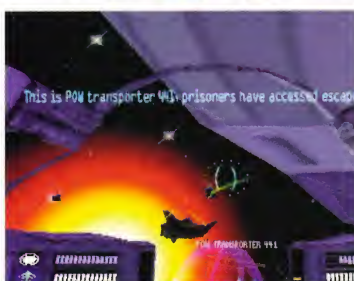
Done that? Okay, now think about how those same wonders of creation will look after we've spent the next couple of millennia raping the Earth of all its worth and generally trashing the place in the name of progress, science, convenience and greed. Kind of takes the gloss off it all doesn't it?

The future has yet to be set, it will be what we make of it. Yet the common opinion among filmmakers and game developers is that it will be a bleak, hostile environment, pillaged of all its resources and made a hollow shell from its once fruitful origins. You have to admit, current trends





The League has big ideas, like storming this battle platform and taking over. Make sure the League's APCs complete their mission objective



would suggest that this apocalyptic vision of the future seems quite a viable fate for mankind, and after playing Colony Wars you'll be convinced of it.

Set in the 44th century after the depletion of Earth's major resources, Colony Wars tells the story of humanity's need to venture into the dark recesses of space in search for planets rich in useful minerals and capable of sustaining life, with the survival of mother planet Earth relying on successful colonisation of other worlds. Years pass, and progress into space has reached unprecedented levels with several star systems having been made home for countless travellers. However, Earth's decline has reached worrying levels and the 'powers that be' decide to take the new approach of purging the colonised planets of every asset to secure the future of our ancestral home.

The colonists are understandably not too pleased to hear that the Earth's Empire has deemed both them and their planets expendable and so 'The League of Free Worlds' is set up to combat the threat of Naval

aggression, and the Colony Wars begin.

The League is led by a mysterious figure known only as The Father, and after the famous victory at the battle of Bennay, the League took the initiative and began to fight back against the Navy, which is where you come in. Starting out with the rank of Believer, it's your job to provide both defensive and offensive support against the constant threat from the Navy.

To work your way up the ranks you'll have to complete mission objectives, which can vary from accompanying passenger transports through high risk areas, to running reconnaissance missions and spearheading assaults on Naval ships and space stations. The purpose and difficulty of the missions varies constantly after the initial easing into the game, and this shifting of objectives keeps you interested even though the playing environment remains the same, (well space is bloody space isn't it, there's nothing there! What did you expect, a cruise-thru McDonalds?). Each mission is preceded by a briefing screen, here you'll find out the objectives for the current mission as well as the history behind why the sortie is



Some of the explosions are breathtaking, especially when you bring the larger fleet craft down. It's not easy though as they all have more than capable defences. Good luck fly boy!



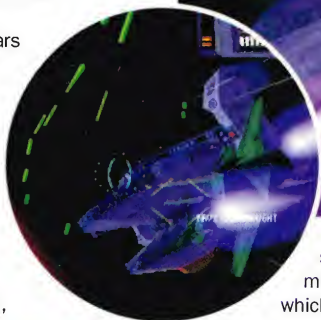
Colony Wars

► required and which craft has been assigned for your use. Which depends on whether speed, aggression or defence is paramount for success. Colony Wars presents itself as an epic saga of tyrannical aggression against innocent freedom fighters, much in the same vein as Star Wars, and this approach is more than justified by the totally engrossing gameplay.

The graphics are nothing short of stunning and interspersed with high-res cut sequences, you can't help but feel drawn into the action, becoming completely immersed in the drama. Fair enough, the story and settings behind Colony Wars aren't the most original, but it's all done so well, only a banzai raiding space hopper could fault this portrayal of interstellar war.

The attention to detail is quite astonishing with general, historical and military data available on every planet in every star system that concerns you, as well as vital stats on both friendly and hostile craft. The planetary info doesn't help too much in completing missions, but it does help to make sense of the plot twists. Ship information can also be really handy as it's often difficult to differentiate between League and Naval vessels in the heat of battle, so reading up on their specs and design traits can aid progress. Vital information is also relayed to you from other pilots and wing men, again insisting that you concentrate on the game, which adds to the overwhelming feel of personal involvement.

The main reason that Colony Wars is so impressive is because of the seamless plot changes that are based on your performance. For instance the successful capture of a Naval Battle Cruiser will lead into a glorifying, morale boosting high-res sequence, championing the victory and building up the next mission. However, failure will see the story twisting to a darker scenario where the stakes are now even higher due to your lack of



success. This applies to all the missions throughout Colony Wars which means that potentially you could see something new each time you play, so you can't help but feel immersed in the game.

The control system is simple yet effective enough to provide complete control over the differing fighters and the weapons at their disposal, which all perform different

functions and are suitable for different tasks, but then you probably knew that anyway. The

fighters fire both primary and secondary weapons, with the secondaries designed to bring down the big boys, though they can be used on smaller craft, but don't expect fire power that's visually stunning. The gameplay demands a strategic approach, and the impressive explosions make up for the lack of devastating weaponry.

I like Colony Wars. I like it a lot. You can see that Psygnosis have put in a lot of work to try and make it all seem realistic, and the effort has paid off. It's a convincing, engrossing game that is visually impressive and coupled with effective gameplay. This comes recommended.

The graphics are really impressive at times, Trekkies will love the detailed high-res destroyers



Each ship is protected by a shield which must be overcome before you can blow them to pieces

PROSCORE

GAME Colony Wars

GENRE Shoot'em-up

SOFTWARE HOUSE Psygnosis

CONTACT 0151 282 3000

RELEASE DATE November

PRICE £44.99

That's right, skip over the three pages of text that I've took the time and effort to lovingly prepare for your game purchasing benefit, and read the bit at the end with the comments, opinions and scores, bloody typical! Well your cunning tactics won't work with me, I'm not going to tell you anything about the mechanics or the intricacies of the game, you'll have to read the review. After all, that's what you bought the mag for. However, I will say this; if you're in the market for a space style shoot'em-up that looks and feels more like a sci-fi movie than a game, then you should buy Colony Wars. Even if you're not, you should buy it anyway. Because this game is ream.

BY JAMES CANNON

GRAPHICS 8.5

SOUND 8

GAMEPLAY 8

LASTABILITY 9

8½

PAUL I really liked this. It's as graphically stunning as G-Police, but I definitely found myself able to get into this easier. Psygnosis are on a roll at the moment, continually releasing a flow of good stuff. Look this up

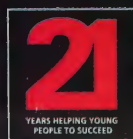
JAY Dog-fighting in space never looked so good. The graphics are unbelievable, the gameplay keeps pulling you back for more and the plotline changes each time you play depending on your performance. A corker!

ANDY Thoroughly enjoyable stuff which is as engaging as it is challenging. It looks stunning and is simple to play. Not too dissimilar to Darklight Conflict, but much more enjoyable and rewarding. Top stuff

HUGH At last, a decent alternative to those tedious Wing Commander games. Psygnosis seem to have got everything just about right here, from the immensely atmospheric graphics and sound to the involving gameplay

THERE'S
A CHARITY THAT
WANTS MORE PEOPLE
TO SUFFER
LIKE THIS.

YOU SHOULD BE AWARE THAT SONY HAVE INFLICTED THEIR NEW SAMPLER ON AN UNSUSPECTING PUBLIC.
POWER SOURCE CONTAINS: TOMB RAIDER, PORSCHE CHALLENGE, MONSTER TRUCKS AND DESTRUCTION DERBY 2.
YES, YOUR THUMBS WILL HURT, YOUR BRAIN WILL HURT, BUT YOUR SOUL WILL BE PURE. ALL PROCEEDS GO TO THE PRINCE'S TRUST.



Peak Performance

Forget high performance race cars - try flinging a Japanese boy racer mobile about mountain hairpins and switchbacks with JVC's latest hot roadster



I blame the software companies – they're ruining me. You see they bring out so many racing games that I can't think of any more intros. I'm sorry, but the 'Haven't you ever wanted to drive a car like a maniac?' opening, now sounds as crass and clichéd as a chat-up line from Roger Moore. Even my old favourite, 'Let's face it, you're probably never going to get to drive a Ferrari,' now seems to creak under its own geriatric weight. So I apologise if my intro isn't its normal chirpy self, you'll just have to bear with me, because I'm reviewing yet another bloody racing game.

Peak Performance is JVC's latest race driving affair, and thankfully, it's a little different from the usual offerings. Unlike most racing games, the aim here isn't to squeeze 180 mph out of a Ferrari on a track full of fast straights and tight bends to test your skill – instead, Peak Performance requires you to hand brake about twisting mountain roads in very obscure Japanese saloon cars.

Okay, so it doesn't sound like the most promising of games concepts, but bear with me. When I loaded Peak Performance up I didn't know quite what to think. Half the cars look like something your dad would buy, and driving them has you initially thinking that somebody has really screwed up the suspension, since the cars rock and slide like mad buggers. But as you play the game everything becomes clear. You see, the aim of the Peak Performance is not to do all that 'ease off the accelerator, cut close to the apex

Should you get a little bored of the standard saloon cars and hatchbacks, try flinging one of these about the road. It looks stupid, but it's fast





of the bend and then accelerate away' sort of thing. The chicanes here are so sharp that you've got to slam the hand brake on, turn early and do one of those four wheel power slides that cop cars always pull off in American movies. The cars are useless for proper road racing, but for doing rally-like slides and hand brake turns, they're treat.

Your choice of cars is really puzzling. Although you've got a selection of 28 in total, I'd be hard pressed to name a single one of them. They just look like fairly bland saloons that Japanese salary men drive (with the exception of something that looks like the old boy racers favourite, an old style Mk II Escort). The only thing they have in common is the fact that they can do over a tonne and handle like somebody has covered their tyres with lard.

However, Peak Performance's biggest surprise is in the graphics department. From only a few minutes of play you'll become aware that, although everything looks like it should, both the scenery and the cars themselves lack some of the graphical embellishments that other racing games boast. In Total Drivin' or TOCA for example, you can see advertisements

plastered over the race cars, dirt rooster tails up from the tyres and dents and damage appear on the body panelling throughout the race. Not so in Peak Performance – here the motors have a slightly boxy look to them and the tracks can tend to look a little Spartan. And the up side from this deliberate attempt to trim back on the graphics? Speed.

According to JVC, Peak Performance has been made to run as fast as possible – as they see it, if you're belting down the road attempting to take a hairpin bend at 80 mph, you're not going to be doing an awful lot of sight-seeing whilst you're at it.

And they've got a point. Initially I was not too impressed by Peak Performance. Although the graphics aren't eye burstingly hideous, I've played so many racing games that I'm used to them having a slightly more polished look about them. A few minutes into the game however, and I was concentrating hard and trying to powerslide my way through countless hairpins. It might not look like a graphical treat, but I was playing it for a fair few hours and, as they say, the proof is in the pudding. ▶



Most of the cars in Peak Performance are distinctly unexotic – like this manky Mazda



Some of the replay views are excellent – viewed from head-on you can see the bloke inside this boy-racer Datsun, yanking the hand brake and heaving the steering wheel



TICKET TO RIDE



Pop quiz ass-hole! Pretend you're Sandra Bullock (and worry your family and friends) in this Speed-esque bus



Or play at being a lorry driver It's very simple really – put on 10 stone, tall-gate people and act like an arrogant t*at



If none of the above really appeal, try out McLaren's ridiculously fast and expensive roadster, the F1



Or go all moddish on the classic Lambretta. As Phil Daniels would say, 'call that a bike, its a ****in' hairdryer'



Peak Performance

► But that's not to say Peak Performance isn't without its flaws. Perhaps the most annoying of which is the fact that in race mode, there are only three tracks to choose from. There are two routes on each track and it will take you ages to master each individual route, but in the long-term it just doesn't offer enough variety. Select time trial mode and you'll have another two courses to choose from, but without the other cars competing against you, this inevitably detracts from the racing fun.

Another annoying little flaw is the fact that the collision detection is quite unrealistic. Drive into another car and they carry on as normal, you on the other hand don't lose control of your car either, but do have a few mph knocked off your speed (this is apparently one of the drawbacks to producing such a fast game – because the frame rate is so high, collision detection is only active on every four frames). Although it makes for a very quick game, unlike in other race games you can't deliberately shove your opponent out of the way by giving them a gentle nudge on a bend.

It's little flaws like this that make Peak Performance a good game rather than a great game. Although dumping graphical excess for speed is a logical idea, you can't help notice that it doesn't look as good as the opposition and the lack of tracks and somewhat dodgy collision detection all detract from the game.



Tired out from all the mad, high jinks, I decide to pull onto the hard shoulder for some nice cucumber sandwiches



Although the bigger cars, like this Mitsubishi, are much faster on the straights, it's harder to hand brake them around corners than the smaller boy racer hot-hatches

PROSCORE

GAME Peak Performance

GENRE Racing

SOFTWARE HOUSE JVC

CONTACT 0171 240 3121

RELEASE DATE Out Now

PRICE £44.99

Peak Performance could have been a fantastic game. The underlying gameplay is undeniably addictive and the twisting mountain tracks and rally-style road holding of the cars, contribute to making a game that can hold the attention of a cynical old racing game fan like me. However, you can't help but think there are loads of missed opportunities here – more tracks and realistic crashes would have made Peak Performance a winner. Having said that though, if you can put up with the no frills graphics and the undeniably bland cars on offer, Peak Performance should provide you with a fair few hours of opposite lock, powersliding entertainment.

BY HUGH POYNTON

GRAPHICS 6

SOUND 7

GAMEPLAY 8

LASTABILITY 8



PAUL Not a fan really. Seen too many racing games lately and I can't rank this as one of the best. It's certainly fast, but speed isn't everything tragically. Really needs to stand out to succeed and it doesn't. Sorry

JAY Good graphics do not maketh the game, but in this day and age gamers aren't satisfied unless they get a subtle mixture of both. PP provides the break-neck speeds we all love, but its presentation lets it down

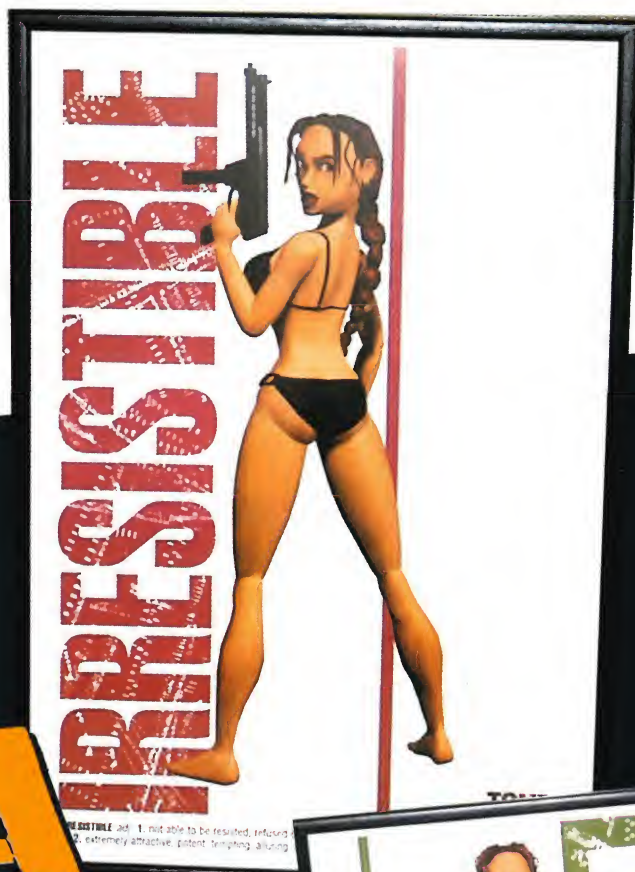
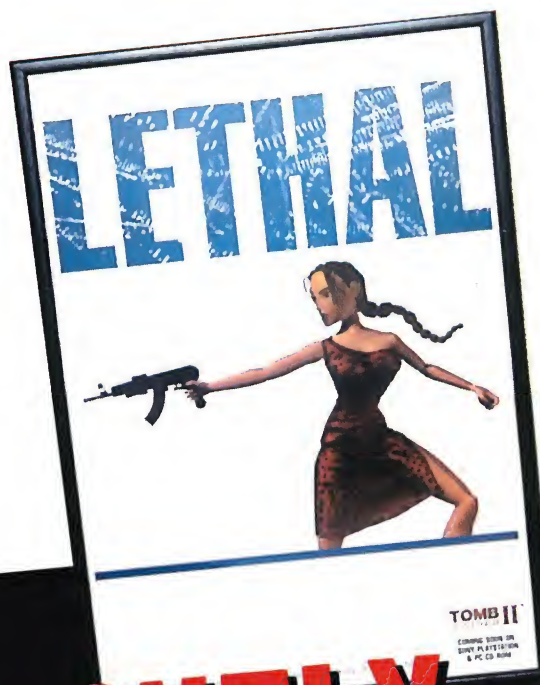
ANDY Racing games always come thick and fast so many of them end up being overlooked by many players. Peak Performance is one of these and although it looks and plays well, it lacks excitement

JAMES There's no denying that this is a fast racing game with a fair amount of playability, but the decision to sacrifice graphics for speed will be its downfall. Hugh's grade seems about right to me



BUMP AND GRIND ON YOUR SOFA





LOVELY LARA LITHOGRAPHS

QUESTION?

Name a Core Design PlayStation release that isn't Lara Croft related?

Answer: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Tel: _____

Send Entries to:

"I LOVE LARA" Competition

IDG Media, FREEPOST (SK3038) Adlington Park Industrial Estate, Macclesfield, SK10 4NP

NOW THAT YOU'VE drooled over the massive review this month and been given a helping hand in finding your way through her newest adventure thanks to our whopping players guide, we thought we'd give you one last Lara injection before the month was out. And here it is.

Our good friends at Core Design have given us a special Christmas present that we're going to give to you lot you see. We have three sets of three limited edition prints (measuring 22x30 inches) of the lovely Lara in the sultry poses you see before you to give away, each one a limited edition in every way, plus they're all framed up too. Now these babies won't be available in the shops, and frankly, this is the only place where you Lara junkies are going to get an opportunity to get your hands on them. Tempted?

Fancy having a huge framed Lara hung above your bed? Of course you do, so enter the competition today as the first three correct answers plucked from our gusset will each walk away with a full set of three framed prints. There can be only three winners, no runners-up prizes or anything like that. So get a grip, answer the question and send it off to us today!



TOCA



TOURING CAR championship

ACTION ON THE EDGE OF YOUR SEAT



Bump and grind
round killer bends
at 147mph, wheel to wheel
in a pack of 16 speeding cars.

Rip it up on all 8 championship tracks in
time trials, single races or even the complete '97 season.

Battle it out against tactically aggressive drivers and as the soundtrack
and fx thunder, switch to in-car view as you tear up the finishing straight.

TOCA, real cars, total gameplay.

PLAYSTATION PLUS
winner 91%

PLAY MAGAZINE 92%
"Packed with smash 'em and crash 'em
gameplay! Even more advanced
than Formula 1 '97... Incredible.
Really fast, really fun, really racing"

Which of these codes enables you to view the
action from a side camera?

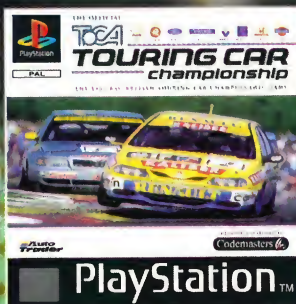
CMTSIDE CMRENCE FOLLOW (3 of 3)



Crash Out



Bump & Grind



Thresh It Out



Cane It



Codemasters

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1997'S REAL CARS, REAL TRACKS, REAL TEAMS,

REAL DRIVERS, REAL VIEWS



THE DICE MAN



Ian Livingstone co-founded role-playing mecca Games Workshop, wrote the Fighting Fantasy gamebooks that sold over 14 million copies and then went on to become chairman of Eidos, the rather successful software publisher. And now the story comes full circle as Eidos adapt his Deathtrap Dungeon opus for us lucky PlayStation chimps. He's a busy bloke. Just as well Dan Whitehead was hanging around ready to ask him the questions you want answered...

Wander round any book shop in the world and you'll eventually come across those familiar green-spined Fighting Fantasy books where you, the acne-riddled reader, can choose where to go next. "If you want to fight the mutant skeleton frot-monster, turn to page 43." That sort of thing. In an age before fancy computer games, this was an unheard of level of interaction and as a 12 year old sci-fi nut, I'd sit and pore my way through the latest adventure with manic relish. Of course, I was never honest enough to play properly, but then neither was the guy who wrote them, as we'll see later.

Dungeons and Dragons was already big when the books were written, but transplanting the 'do what you want' approach of role-playing into a book was a pretty impressive idea. And it can't have been easy. Being a bit of a posey tosser, I planned to write this article in the style of the books, the idea being that you'd have to keep thumbing backwards and forwards to find out what the game's like. I gave up after one paragraph. It made my head hurt. Sir Livingstone and fellow fantasy mogul Steve Jackson managed to invent it down the pub, like a proper pair of smart arses.

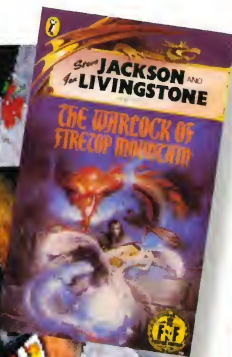
"Having founded Games Workshop with Steve in 1975 and launched Dungeons & Dragons in Europe, I'd been heavily into RPGs for many years," Ian admits. "I was also a big reader of

SF and fantasy books and comics so, one night down at the pub with Steve, the idea to fuse an RPG and a book into a 'gamebook' simply emerged during our lager inspired ramblings.

"The concept was born on the back of a beer mat and took us a couple of months to develop into a game system. We kept it deliberately simple so as not to slow down the decision making process of the adventures. We spent a long time giving the monsters realistic combat values, but couldn't really test the play balance until the first adventure was written."

The back of beer mat, eh? Dead casual. And yet, Ian and Steve never believed that the books would be a big hit. "We were very surprised how well they did, especially after learning that Penguin Books didn't have high hopes for them. But the 14,500,000 copies sold to date in 23 languages was beyond anybody's wildest dreams."

Now, the idea of the books was that you'd roll dice to work out who won in battles, and if you died then you had to accept your fate like a man. Ha! Like everyone else I knew, I cheated like a great steaming bugger. Judicious use of bookmarks and a complete absence of dice made sure that I was invincible no matter how many stupid decisions I made. But I'm not proud of it, so over 10 years later, it seems only right to confess my sins to the man who



As you can see from the screenshots, Deathtrap Dungeon is home to a wealth of surreal sword-swinging oddities as well as scantily-clad maidens



worked so hard, only for me to ignore his intricate combat system and labyrinthine plots. Mr Livingstone, I am an ungrateful cheating cur. But, wait! No clip round the ear? He may have played his own books all the way through, but when it came to the others, Ian was a cheat just like the rest of us.

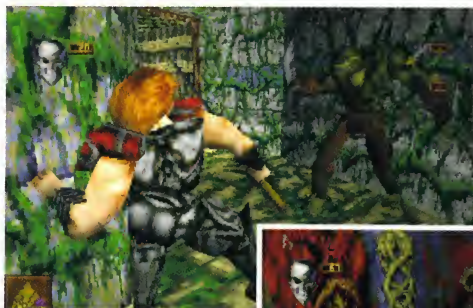
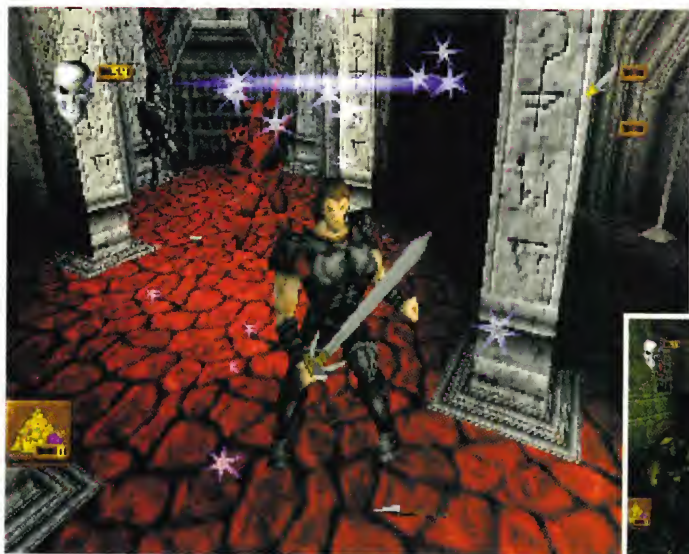
"Of course I cheated!" he admits. "Who doesn't? Fingers were designed to hold a book open on several pages!"

Yes! A whole decade of subconscious guilt just melted away. It had been playing on my mind for years. Anyway, as the Fighting Fantasy bandwagon moved on, with inevitable copies based on such bizarre licenses as The A Team and He Man (I know, I had them and they were shit), another innovation was becoming sneakily popular – the home computer...

"We thought computers would take away the hassle of record keeping, player statistics, magical items, gold pieces and combat, but didn't believe they would really come into their own until decent processing power would allow good graphics. After all, there is no real benefit of a text adventure being on a computer screen as opposed to the printed page."

A point rammed home by an early ZX Spectrum game based on the very first FF book, The Warlock Of Firetop Mountain. As a text adventure, it was in Ian's own words "not





Players get the choice to choose between the butch and manly 'Chain Dog' or the sultry 'Red Lotus' when they begin their blood-letting quest. Obviously, Red Lotus looks a lot better from behind



THE DICE MAN

► much of an improvement on the gamebook." Which seems to be the *raison d'être* behind Deathtrap Dungeon. It's not just the book crammed into a PSX, it's an improvement on the story. Freed from the restrictions of dice rolling and with lush 3D graphics, it's taken the notion to a whole new level. But out of the 40 or so FF books, why pick Deathtrap Dungeon?

"Deathtrap Dungeon was not only my favourite, but the readers' favourite too, judging by the amount of fan mail I received on it. The 'you-will-never-get-out-of-here-alive' scenario appealed to everybody." But how do you translate the textual decision-making structure of the book into a 3D adventure game?

"A 3D action adventure game allows total freedom, whereas the gamebook only allowed multiple choices. Therefore, the computer game generates infinite possibilities," offers Ian by way of explanation. "However, the basic plot remains an adventure through the trap-ridden dungeon killing as many loathsome creatures as possible en route, find the right keys, secret passageways, spells and weapons and get out... if you can."

Given the nature of the source material, and possibly influenced by the Spectrum version of

Warlock, I'd always thought that a more traditional adventure format would be used. Something like Broken Sword or Legacy Of Kain, maybe?

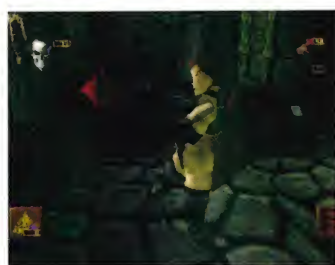
"I much prefer to roam through a realistic 3D world with a 3D character," Ian claims. Perhaps not entirely unusual for the man who runs the home of Tomb Raider. "I get bored with point and click puzzles which usually require some irrelevant and obscure solution. Problems not puzzles always do it for me".

Those old enough, like me, to remember the original book may have scratched their heads at some of the Deathtrap Dungeon screenshots





Of course, waving a big sword about isn't your only option in combat. Numerous other weapons and magic can also be used in order to kick ass



being bandied about. Like the uber-mammaried appearance of a dungeon babe called Red Lotus, not to mention the use of explosives and guns. Is this a case of lusty, firestarting programmers getting carried away? Apparently not...

"The programmers are probably sick and tired of me interfering all the time," says Ian, "But when you are passionate about something it has to be done right. Deathtrap Dungeon has been a long time in development, but it has been worth the struggle and I can happily say that it has been done within the spirit of the book. Luckily, a lot of the team were Fighting Fantasy fans in their youth and so they were



aware of my needs and wishes."

Okay, so you've got a technically stunning, highly promising adventure game based on just one of a massive range of books. Ripe for plundering, yeah? So what's next? Given that Ian describes his ultimate epic where you play God interfering with peoples' lives, whatever the next game is, it'll be big. More Fighting Fantasy conversions would be nice though and thankfully, it looks like it's going to happen. "We are currently looking at City of Thieves," Ian reveals, "which will probably be the subtitle for Deathtrap Dungeon 2." Remember, you heard it here first, kids.

The playing cards below aren't just for decoration. Eldos are planning on releasing them as a sort of 'Top Trump' style card game. Watch this space!



In the meantime, join the queue for Deathtrap Dungeon. It's huge – 10 levels, with a further 10 sub-levels living inside them like a crazy tapeworm. It's gorgeous – full 3D movement, with lovely animation. It's violent – arms and legs fly everywhere as you unleash your brutal fighting moves. It's involved – with spells, potions and mazes to figure out. 'Deathtrap Dungeon' – it does exactly what it says on the box. But the one thing we all really want to know is – who's harder, Lara Croft or Deathtrap Dungeon's very own sword-wagging beauty, Red Lotus?

"Whilst Lara Croft packs a mean pair of pistols," Ian sniggers, "she's got no chance against Red Lotus and her devastating medieval rocket launcher..."





They might be small, rich and incredibly annoying in theme parks, but the Japanese know a thing or two about videogames. The evidence was there for our roving reporter Jon Mullermann to see at the recent AMS show in Tokyo, as he tried to determine which of the new breed of games would make it to PlayStation

On arrival into customs at Tokyo airport you're greeted with a sign. 'Welcome To Japan - Please Obey The Rules.' Oh, okay. I was just about to commit countless heinous acts of wanton depravation and brutal murder but fortunately, the timely presentation of your sign has precluded me from doing so. Thank you Japan, for bringing the blindingly obvious to my attention in the most patronising manner you could possibly imagine.

Actually, it's extremely difficult to break the rules in a country where: Natural Born Killers is on sale in the corner shop; schoolgirls have sex before they reach their teens and still manage to come under the legal age of consent; bottled

LAND OF THE



RACE!

RACING JAM, KONAMI

Only half complete as a coin-op product at the time of testing, this touring car effort puts you behind the respective wheels of Subaru's, Hondas etc. (all very Japanese) with three models of each car to choose from and even a semi-auto gear option for the Don Brennans amongst you.

Graphic definition is treat, there are loads of courses and a full five speed transmission. If the unfinished steering matches up to the graphics, a winner is what you've got.

PSexy? Certainly, a rival for the Ridge Racer series and possibly V-Rally.

MOTOCROSS GO!, NAMCO

Namco's MotoCross Go! was one of the better products at the show. Another game on which you must sit in shame on a plastic bike, this makes it worthwhile with great graphics, a choice of bikes which actually do perform differently and a lot of similarly skilled computer riders. The rugged terrain makes a change from concrete tracks and the variety of obstacles such as steps, jumps and all manner of other stuff set this apart.

And it's not a 'hard ride' either, giving the player a genuine chance of making even the tightest turns without going arse over tit.

PSexy? It's a shame but again, probably not. Porting this across would water it down and make an excellent coin-op an average consoler. Unless Namco knows different.



sweat can be purchased from convenient vending machines and karaoke bars charge 20 quid an hour for the chance to strangle a well known and perfectly good tune.

This aside, the country is uncannily like England, and it doesn't take long to work out why. Everyone drives Japanese cars. In other ways of course it differs greatly: there's something to do at night; the trains run on time; no tramps exist to bark obscenely as you walk sheepishly by; the taxi drivers don't expect tips for taking you six yards; and they don't cook their fish, (of course that is in general, not just the peculiar taxi drivers).

Strangely alluring though they may be,

skanky fish, dirty schoolgirls and junkie tramps were not the focus of attention in Tokyo – videogames were. At the end of September the world-wide coin-op industry descended on the city for the 35th Amusement Machine Show (God only knows what they showed pre-1980).

Organised by trade body JAMMA (Japanese Amusement Machine Manufacturers' Association for, erm, short) the event is a four day product fest featuring all the latest releases from Sega, Namco, Konami, Capcom and the rest. If you've played it in an arcade, it was shown at AMS first, and if you've played it on your console, there's a good chance that this is where it began its career before making it big.

Feeding in money like it's going out of fashion is all very well, but the popularity of arcade games doesn't last long. The canny Japanese know that for serious dosh they need to attract an interested party and get themselves a console conversion. 10 million PlayStations, six million Satums and up to five million N64s already sit under tellies across the globe and it doesn't take a genius to work out that sales to a tiny percentage of these owners is very big business indeed.

So you want to know what fantastic titles will be coming your PlayStation's way in the coming months? Read on foolish readers, and find out all...

RISING FUN

SCRAP!

MORTAL KOMBAT 4, WILLIAMS

Better than the other three put together, this effort is reported to have caused many a creamy pair of trousers in MK aficionado circles when it did a pre-release tour of the States. Chunky polygonal graphics replace the dated digitisation and there are now five new characters from a choice of 12, with new moves, new fatalities, new haircuts and a liberal smattering of the all-important gore. Top notch stuff.

PSeXy? Yep, you know it's gonna come and there's no reason for it not to be every bit as good as the coin-op.

NFL BLITZ, WILLIAMS

Okay, so you may think American football is just a field full of soft-arsed, shoulder-padded drug monkeys too stupid to play real football. You might be right, but this game is different. Officially licensed from the NFL, it's programmed by the team behind NBA Jam on brand new 3DFX hardware and thankfully doesn't take itself too seriously, with seven-on-seven action concentrating just as much on the crunching tackles as the finer points of tactics.

Turbos, all the league players and the chance to hit people. That's just magic!

PSeXy? John Madden meets NBA Jam... could it ever fail?



DO OTHER STUFF!

GET BASS, SEGA

Now a fishing game is only ever going to have limited appeal. This game can only be targeted at people to whom fishing is a pleasant way of spending several fruitless days on a chilly river bank in Oslo and who also enjoy the odd trip to Segaworld and Namco Stations. Shame then, that this particular demographic group numbers only three. A reel mechanism forms part of the cabinet, with a handy button for casting from your boat ('cos that's what you're in). And then you wait. And wait a bit more. And cast again, because it's fun, and wait. And all of a sudden you get a bite, as advertised by the over-excited commentator who simply screams, "Fish!" Yes mate, we know. This is a battle of wits and test of mettle as you cajole, force, beg and swear until your catch is landed. Or not. Very nice. No, really.

PSeXy? Not a likely contender, but then Sony themselves have had a similar effort on the market. And that was dob too.

RAPID RIVER, NAMCO

Now here's a thing. A white water rafting game where you sit in a great orange boat and paddle with the front-mounted oars. Silly eh? Well yes, but then so was Namco's Prop Cycle and few would argue that wasn't fun.

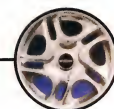
Actually it isn't entirely fair because the crafty Japanese are able to squeeze two in a boat and therefore milk extra "row-power" out of their sturdy craft, while us lard-assed Euros must battle on alone, cross whirlpool, avoid rocks and aim for the bonus stages where the blisters just get bigger. Can't decide whether this is taking things too far, or being ludicrously creative, but it's fun, whatever.

PSeXy? Well Transport Tycoon comes with a mouse, so if Namco could pack a bloody great dinghy in the box this would be a smash...



THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD





Five years ago, some eager beaver over at Sony Interactive came up with an idea for a modest little game he referred to as 'The Ultimate Racing Game.' Half a decade and thousands of racing games later Sony is preparing to unveil the finished product – Gran Turismo



if there is a new PlayStation racing game on the way which is being greeted with eager anticipation rather than indifference or tortured groans, mark my words, it's going to be a good one. As you might have noticed, the racing game genre has rapidly become the safe choice for creatively bankrupt games developers, and with developers churning out more racing games than Dagenham does Fords, the market is rapidly approaching saturation point.

And the weird thing is, these games are usually quality affairs – in recent months Total Drivin', TOCA and Test Drive 4 have all upped the standard of your average driving game to an unprecedented high. So, as I say, when a game comes along that has people genuinely excited, you'd better sit up and take notice.

You see, the main selling point behind Sony's latest foray into the world of high speed automobiles is the fact that it includes not five cars, not 10 cars, not even 20 cars, but a staggering 120 vehicles, all with their own distinctive handling characteristics covering a total of 10 different racing categories. Kind of makes 'Need For Speed' pale into insignificance doesn't it?

The brainchild of one of Sony Interactive's in-house developers, Kazunori Yamauchi (who's rather modest ambition was to create a game with 'each and every sports car in the game and to reproduce all the race categories available'), the concept behind Gran Turismo dates back almost five years. In the days of the Megadrive and Amiga, the hardware for such an undertaking simply wasn't powerful enough – the project had to wait until the

PlayStation came along to realise the game's full potential. Which, apparently, it does rather admirably.

Each and every car in Gran Turismo has its own unique handling capabilities, reproduced using advanced simulation techniques with scary sounding acronyms, such as APSM (Automobile Physics Simulation Model) and EM (Environmental Mapping). Graphically the game boasts features such as photo-realistic texture mapping and real-time lighting effects. All this technical mugginess means that the game looks the absolute mutts nuts.

Although epic in scale, the main game will be divided into two main sections, which doesn't sound that mind blowing until you look a little closer and realise that each section is about 10 times bigger than your average driving game. The laughably titled 'Quick Arcade' mode, (which from the sounds of things will still keep you tied up for a fair few years of play), allows you instant access to 40 cars and five huge tracks in different locations including city circuits and mountainside tracks. The car control will be specially configured so that driving the cars won't be too much of a ball acher if you're in the mood for some high speed arcade action.

Alternatively you could go for the full monty and opt for the 'Gran Turismo' mode which will let you behind the wheel of the full 120 cars (albeit only once you've proved you can drive them – you'll have to obtain a licence for each particular vehicle class). Rather than obeying the simplified car physics model chosen for the arcade mode, all the motors in Gran Turismo mode will behave like the real

THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD

► thing. Brake at the wrong point on a sharp bend and the car's rear end will flip out. Steer too sharply at speed and you'll end up smeared across the tarmac. In short, one mode plays like an arcade game (albeit an incredibly detailed one) and the other is a bona fide racing car driving sim.

As well as including more motors than your average issue of *Exchange and Mart*, the full Gran Turismo mode features more than 11 tracks and 10 different race championships. Sony Interactive have even included the rather boy racerish option of being able to upgrade

your car with hundreds of different parts and the ability to tune the car to your requirements. Lavish enough care and attention on your motor and you'll be able to waste anything else in its class.

And for the more narcissistic gamer, Sony have included a rather grand sounding 'replay theatre.' Obviously with such a class sounding moniker, the 'replay theatre' is a cut above your

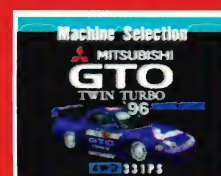
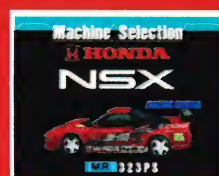
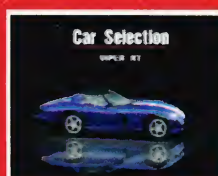
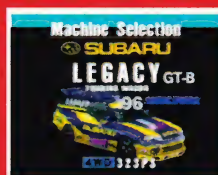
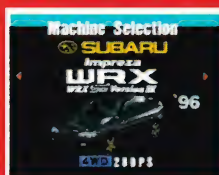
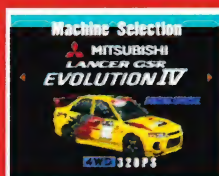
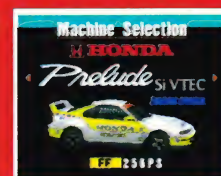
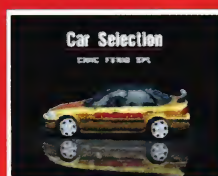


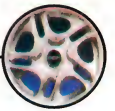
average action replay option. Rather than the same old 'three views from behind' type action that you'd find in most other racing games, Sony reckon that Gran Turismo will knit together the racing action so it looks like you're viewing it on TV (the Grand Prix that is, not 'Driving School').

Add to this the fact that Gran Turismo will be a multi-player racer (always a bonus seeing that even the most advanced computer AI still hasn't grasped the finer points of road rage) and I think you'll have to agree that Mr Yamauchi's little baby is looking like being the driving game of 1998. Find out whether or not Sony's automotive epic lives up to its pretty ambitious promises when we review Gran Turismo early in the New Year.

THE CAR'S THE STAR

One of Gran Turismo's main selling points is the sheer choice of cars. In addition to featuring top class exotic beasts that (unless you're absolutely loaded) you're never going to get a chance to drive short of using a brick and some wire cutters, the game includes some rather more down-market vehicles. Check out the 'just passed my driving test, borrowed it off my mum' Honda Civic or the businessman's special, the Nissan Primera. Although on the surface these typically middle-class motors may look as dull as dishwater, you haven't tried racing them at 120 mph have you?





Although you're going to have to start off with something a little grannyish (like a Honda Civic), hone your driving skills and you'll earn enough cash to get something a little more impressive like this Toyota Celica GT4 Works Rally Car



As you can see the graphical detail in Gran Turismo is extremely impressive



Nice scenery if you've got time to look at it. No time to stop for a picnic though...

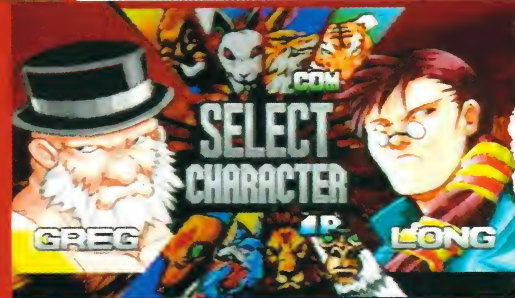
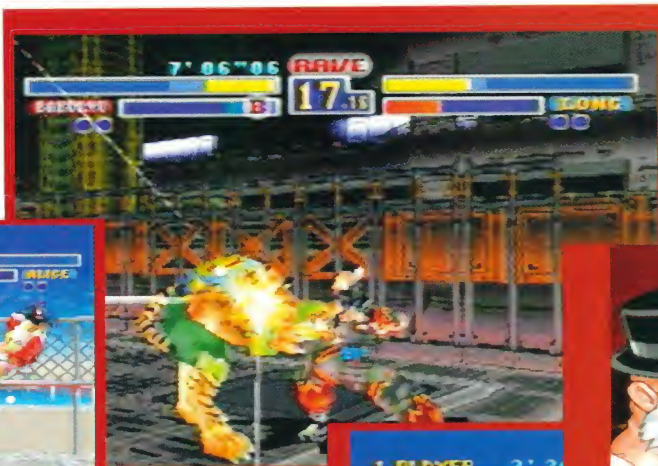
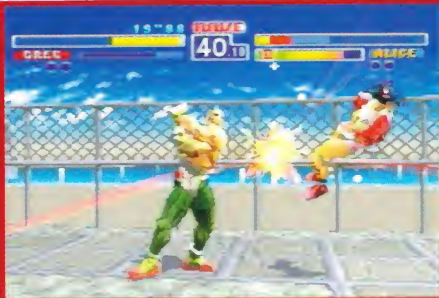


Thankfully, Sony Interactive haven't overlooked a multi-player option - no matter how amazing a game looks, it's going to go down in everybody's estimation if you haven't got the option to tailgate, shove and ram your mates off the road at every opportunity

FINE TUNED

As everybody knows, you can't drive a car without having the stereo on - it's just not done unless you're over 70, wear a flat cap and drive your brown Austin Allegro at 30 mph regardless of where you are. Which is why Sony have decided to incorporate into Gran Turismo a soundtrack that sounds a little more impressive than the usual Yank pub rock or second-rate dull techno tunes that most racing games incorporate. The rumour is that Sony are currently in discussions to develop a techno remix soundtrack featuring the likes of the Manic Street Preachers, Garbage, Feeder, Dubstar and Ash, so expect a cut above your usual driving tunes.

These



Each of the Bloody Roar's characters' special moves correspond to the animal they morph into. Choose the top-hatted wrestler who changes into a gorilla and you will be able to deliver devastating clenched fist earthquake punches. Likewise, Lionbloke will grab his adversaries by their neck and shake'em around cat-style.



Animal Men



The Bloody Roar's developers, HudsonSoft have included a fully customisable control system into the game so that you can adapt the control pad to your own style of play. If you're a beat'em-up purist and think three keys are perfectly adequate to leather the opposition, so be it. However, if you're more like me and want to use every available button on the pad, even if it means tying your fingers in knots, go for it

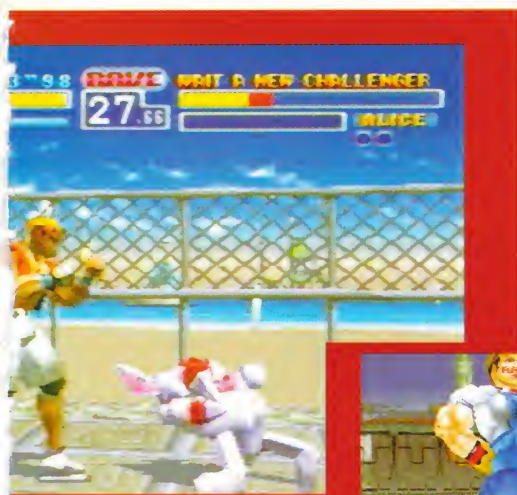
Beat'em-ups need a genuinely original slant to succeed. Having your fighters turn into aardvarks could be considered original...

OH TO BE ONE OF the characters in Virgin's latest beat'em-up, The Bloody Roar. Some bloke starts mouthing off at you down the pub because you dripped beer on his shoe or laughed at his moustache and KAZOOM, instead of ducking down and legging it out of there, you turn instead into a muscle bound, huge pink rabbit. That'd have the bugger scared. Well, maybe?

You see, unlike your bog-standard beat'em-up where the most your characters can manage is the odd fire-ball and special move, the combatants in The Bloody Roar get themselves out of sticky situations by morphing themselves into walking man/animal hybrids. And if you think they look ugly after they've changed into animals, you should see them before. Whereas in most arcade fighters the game characters will be muscular hunks or lycra clad young nubile, most of The Bloody Roar's protagonists look like Thundercat refugees. The women look like big hairy militant feminists and the blokes are Noddy Holder lookalikes (there's even one who looks the spitting image of housewife's favourite 70s crooner, Barry Mannilow).

In addition to the characters unique morphing capabilities, each combatant has a huge variety of fighting moves, both offensive and defensive. Unlike a fair few other arcade fighters, you can haul yourself up onto the side of the ring and jump on your opponents shoulders, before wrestling them to the ground. Keep your health well up and you'll be able to take advantage of the special 'beast rage' that'll have you flooring opponents left right and centre.

Add to this the fact that The Bloody Roar has possibly the funniest intro sequence ever seen on a PlayStation game (watch as the camera sweeps past rainy streets and dark forests to reveal massive man-come-monkeys clenching their furry paws at the sky) and you have what you might consider a pretty classy looking beat'em-up. So get in touch with your primal side when The Bloody Roar hits the stores (and pet shops) this Spring.



The Bloody Roar includes a pretty useful practice mode which, in addition to allowing you to experimentally give the other beasts a good slapping, also displays the level of damage that each punch and kick causes. Now you've got no excuse for getting absolutely leathered because you're just randomly pressing buttons in the vain hope you'll unleash some devastating special move

Game Title

The Bloody Roar

Software House

Virgin

Release Date

December '98

Cock a Hoop

Fancy arsing about on an old coin-op favourite whilst saving all your 20p pieces? Well your dreams have now come true...

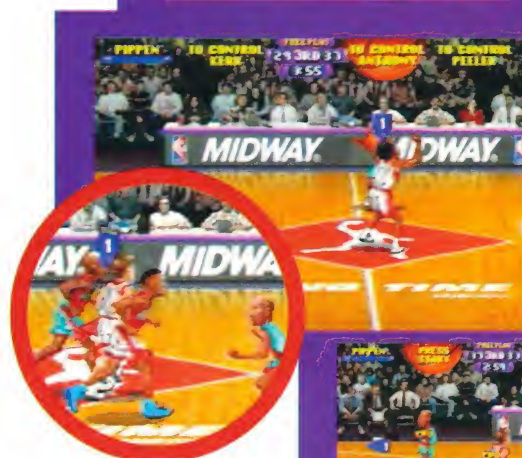
LET'S FACE IT, EVERY NOW and then you want to play a sports game that isn't chock full of player strategies, intricately rendered representations of famous stadiums and complex controls – you just want to hammer away on a carefree arcade affair like you might find whilst having a pint in your average pub or arcade.

If you're beginning to get a little bored of the rather serious and technical sports sims that have come our way in recent months, then maybe NBA Hangtime will be more your cup of tea. GT in their infinite wisdom have seen fit to take the sports simulation, strip it of its motion-capture, polygon modelling and all that malarkey and concentrate on good old fashioned sprite-based fun.

In keeping with the decision to concentrate on simple arcade action, GT have decided to go for five-a-side tournaments as opposed to full teams and you can understand the reason why. With all the other players stripped from the team, you don't have to worry about the often tedious business of deciding team strategy or style of play. In two-player mode, you and your mate are the team.

Although immense fun to play, NBA makes no pretence about being a serious game. The emphasis here is on arcade, so realism takes something of a backseat. The heads of all the players are bizarrely oversized (this is apparently something the Americans really go for – they like to be able to recognise the faces of their favourite players) and the moves include features such as flaming baskets and red hot balls (very uncomfortable so I'm told) whenever you manage to score a hat-trick.

If you're up for a pure unadulterated arcade sports fest, NBA Hangtime and its sister title NHL Open Ice should be in the shops this Spring.

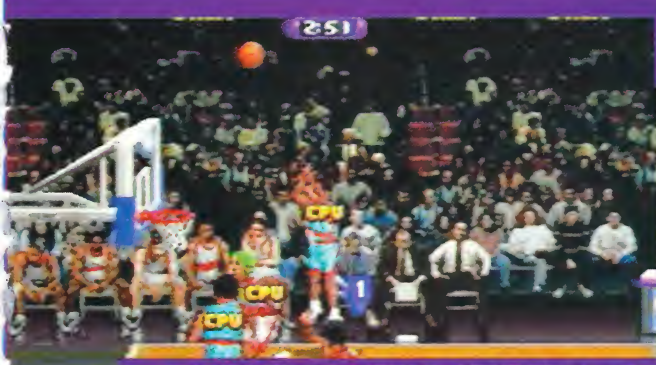


If you get bored of the players available in NBA Hangtime, there's an option included in the game which will allow you to create your own player. In addition to selecting how you want you competitor to look, you are also able to determine their strengths and weaknesses. By using a name/pin combination you can keep track of all your player's game stats and figures





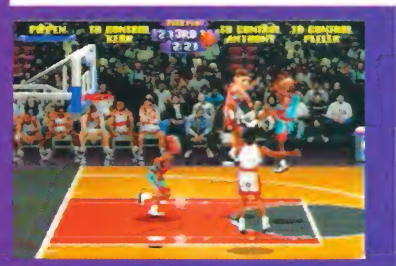
PREVIEW



Unlike your bog standard game of basketball, NBA Hangtime's two-on-two tournaments have a much greater emphasis on how you score than your average basketball game. Whereas in a 'normal' game of basketball the odd slam dunk or lay up would have sufficed, NBA Hangtime frowns on conventional methods of play. Mad body windmills and pushing and shoving are the order of the day here



In one form or another, NBA Hangtime has been around for donkey's years. NBA Jam and NBA Hangtime both proved to be immensely popular on the SNES and there is even a version available for the N64. According to one particularly vocal Yank fan who's announced his love of the game in a rarely visited website, 'the player's heads were awesome... it looks like a cartoon, a drawing or something!'. Sophisticated people these Americans...



Game Title
NBA Hangtime
Software House
GT Interactive
Release Date
January '98

breakin' the law

Car crime is on the increase, the city is awash with drugs and firearms – Moss Side? No, a TV screen near you

THE BRITISH TABLOID PRESS LOVE a little bit of controversy, especially when it concerns that hoary old chestnut, the 'subverting our youth' story. If you were to believe everything you read in the press you'd believe that Teletubbies are teaching kids to speak gibberish, the youth of today neck so many alchopops that they're permanently incontinent, and that sinister figures are lurking in the shadows just waiting to push video nasties and hard drugs onto unsuspecting youngsters.

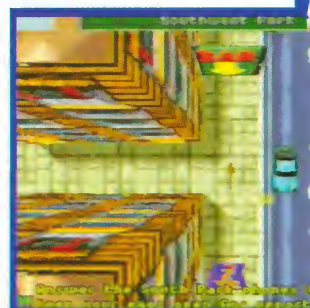
Recently, videogames have started getting it in the neck again – when Carmageddon was released for the PC, MPs were up in arms just because you could run over little old ladies in your armoured car. Well, they're going to just love Grand Theft Auto then...

The aim of the game in BMG's latest top down shoot'em-up is simple – nick cars, ferry drugs about and kill cops until you've earned the status of the most dangerous man in town. Unlike other driving games, this one doesn't restrict you to driving just one vehicle. Although you start off with a sports car, the nature of the various missions in the game mean that you're going to have to car-jack other vehicles, left right and centre, to achieve your objectives. In fact, several of the missions require you to nip down side alleys and do a few gang-land slayings.

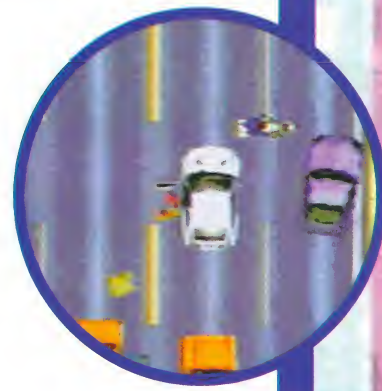
Although totally lacking in anything resembling morals (you get points for knocking people over in the most stylish possible way for God's sake!) Grand Theft Auto is pure, wicked fun. The huge variety of missions available range from nicking taxis for a bank job to ambushing another gang's dealers. All this action usually involves loads of wanton destruction, with enough police chases to fill three series of 'Police Stop!' and more swearing than your average Oasis Radio One interview.

Although viewed from an almost cartoony overhead perspective that makes the game look about as offensive as Motor Mash, I'll eat my boxer shorts if Grand Theft Auto doesn't result in MPs and consumer watchdogs going bright red in the face and cursing BMG, videogames and the state of modern society in general.

Having said that though, I've been playing Grand Theft Auto all morning and I haven't pinched any cars, done any drivebys or ambushed any dealers yet. That'll have to wait until I get out of work...



Each of the three cities in Grand Theft Auto is huge. According to BMG, if you were to get out of whatever car you'd just nicked and walk from one end of the city to the other, it would take you about 40 minutes





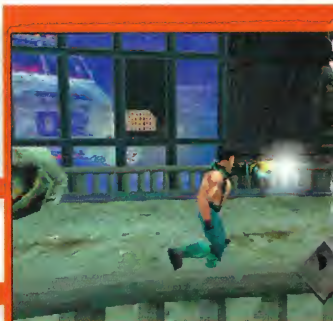
Although the graphics might look a little simplistic, Grand Theft Auto has a depth of gameplay you don't see in that many games. Every car that drives about the three US cities in the game can be stolen. Depending on what you nick, different tunes will be played. Pinch a pick-up and good ol' boy music will blare out. Steal a high performance bike and you'll get frantic dance tunes

Scattered about the town you'll find a fair number of dodgy garages. If you've got the police chasing you, nip into one of these and a change of plates and a respray will help shake the cops off your scent. It'll cost money of course, but a couple of stolen Porsches should cover the bill

You don't have to do what your gang boss says - If you fancy going it alone you can. Although you'll get richer pickings through looting and nicking on your own, the risks involved are much higher. On the plus side though, there won't be any time limits so you can take the game at a more leisurely pace

Game Title
Grand Theft Auto
Software House
BMG
Release Date
December

One Armed Bandit



Thankfully not the self indulgently melancholy dirge song by U2, but a new MDK style 'kill'em all' from ASC Games

JOHN CAIN IS MAD, VERY mad. Apparently, whilst he was sleeping some joker replaced his left arm with a huge laser cannon (If you've had your eyebrow shaved off whilst sleeping, you'll appreciate how annoying this could be). In one fell swoop he's gone from being Mr Average to a fugitive on the run from heavily armed and extremely dangerous adversaries, and he has no idea why. So it's understandable that he's more than a little pissed off.

Which is fortunate because, rather than rely on conventional power-ups, in ASC Games' latest shoot'em-up, One, the angrier John Cain gets, the more potent his firepower becomes. If you stand still and don't attack any enemies, your strength and firepower will decrease, keep up the momentum and John will become ever stronger. The old adage, 'don't get angry, just get even' certainly doesn't hold true to the action in this game.

Harnessing the rage and firepower that make Cain a force to be reckoned with, your job is to guide the reluctant combatant through five devastating levels full of deadly attack helicopters, ruthless assassins and armoured vehicles. The mayhem is viewed from a dark, atmospheric MDK type perspective, with an 'intelligent camera' ensuring that you don't miss any of the action.

And believe me, there is a fair amount of action. The game is one of the fastest on the PlayStation. Whether Cain's running, jumping, flipping, rolling or sliding, he moves faster than a greased up greyhound. And what's more, up to 10 enemies can appear on the screen without the machine slowing down. Liberal use has been made of motion-capture technology, enabling John Cain to undertake cinema style stunts like sliding down high tension cables whilst being shot at by lasers and machine gun fire.

And, if you want to find out why John has had his arm cut off and replaced with a robotic laser gun, ASC aren't giving anything away, so I'm afraid you're going to have to wait until January '98 when One is released. Sorry.



One thing that can really detract from a game is when great sections of FMV are suddenly thrown in. One moment you're playing the game - the next you're suddenly watching a couple of has-been actors trading bad lines with one another in an unconvincing set. However, ASC are boasting that One's cinematic sections are seamlessly blended into the action so as not to break the pace of the game - rather like in Interstate 76



It's not just your firepower and speed that gets beefed up when Cain's angry. The amount of special moves and the quality of your marksmanship will also increase. It's a tiring bugger to play but, believe me, it makes a welcome change from the unrealistic 'lots of guns and medicine packs lying around for no particular reason' scenario that every shoot'em-up from Wolfenstein to Judge Dredd seems to use



Little tinkers that they are, ASC have designed One so that you only uncover the story behind John Cain's plight bit by bit as you progress through the game. Unlike most games where everything is explained right at the start, One keeps you guessing until the end. It adds to the mystery and tension and probably saves a hell of a lot of money having to do a lengthy intro sequence

Game Title

One

Software House

ASC

Release Date

TBA

Oooh you cheeky monkey!

If you thought that the only people who got enjoyment out of bits of clay were weird beardy craft types, think again...

VIDEOGAMES ARE THE NEW ROCK and roll. At least that's what Dave Geffen must think, because the music industry boss has invested millions of his hard earned dollars in Dreamworks Interactive, one of the USA's youngest software houses. Dreamworks Interactive is the games wing of the much vaunted Dreamworks leisure giant, a super team consisting of Dave Geffen, Stephen Spielberg and Jeffery Katzenberg. Well, they can make good music and films, but can they cut the mustard when it come to videogames? Skull Monkeys, Dreamworks Interactive's upcoming release should provide a few answers.

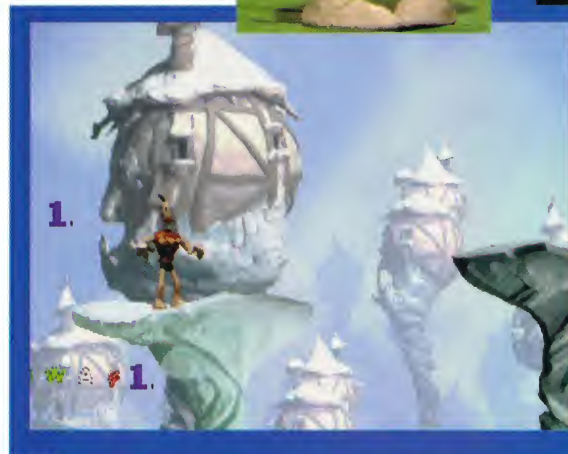
Skull Monkeys promises to give the platform gaming genre a welcome shot in the arm, with its innovative take on a very old format. Produced by LA developers Neverhood,

Skull Monkeys sports a graphical style that looks like a weird mish-mash of Morph, Duckman and Rocko's Modern Life. Neverhood boss, Douglas TenNapel, has been vociferous in the past that an excess of storyline can kill a title's gameplay, so don't expect masses of in-depth character profile and plot intrigue in Skull Monkeys. All you need to know is that the game follows the fortunes of Klayman, a plasticine hero on his quest to subdue the wily

Skull Monkeys of the planet Idznak.

Skull Monkey owes its distinctive graphical style to the fact that the game characters, and much of the world they inhabit is clay animated, as are the FMV sequences between stages. The animation is pretty impressive, consisting as it does from well over 20,000 frames of animation. The gameplay is quirky and stupid enough for even the most messed up individual. There are over a hundred levels which include weapons and power-ups with names such as 'hamster shield,' 'fart-head,' 'super willie' and the very painful sounding 'univeeeeerse enema.'

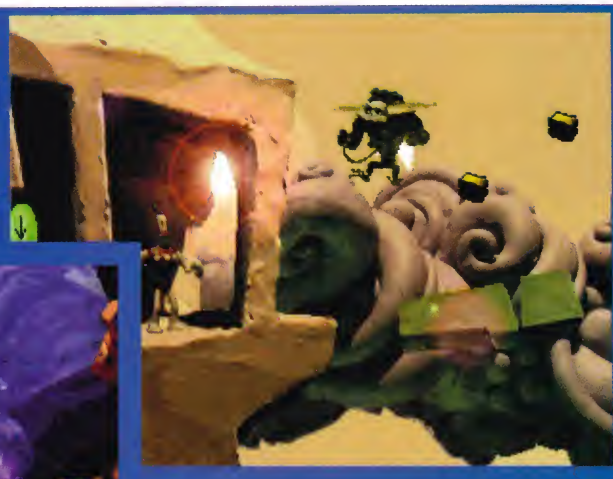
Who knows it might even start a trend – but don't hold your breath for a Wallace and Grommit beat'em-up. Anyhow, if you're craving a little clay/monkey/farting action you can breath easily – Skull Monkeys should be coming to a shop near you this Spring.





PREVIEW

The Skull Monkeys aren't all bad - in fact they're just a bit misguided. Klogg, the head of the Skull Monkeys is in fact a Klayman in disguise, masquerading so as to enlist the simian fellas in his evil plans for world domination. If your character Klay fails to break through the Monkey's defences, Klogg will be able to complete building his secret weapon, the Evil Engine #9 and every Klayman and monkey in the world will be enslaved



If you don't think you could face over 100 levels of jumping, bumping and shooting, scrolling platform levels, don't worry. Developers Neverhood have included different styles of arcade gameplay throughout the game, including levels where you have to guide Klay through additional stages in a tadpole-like space craft and a mad rodeo-style race on a headless clay blob horse.



Skull Monkeys isn't Klogg or Klay's first game. The entire Skull Monkeys platformer is inspired by an earlier Neverhood production called, as it turns out, Neverhood. The PC puzzle adventure game was set on the clay planet of Neverhood and followed Klay's attempts to foil Kloggs plans for world domination. Although much more puzzle and problem solving oriented, Neverhood sported the same strange, but distinctive style as featured in Skull Monkeys



Game Title
Skull Monkeys
Software House
Dreamworks
Release Date
February '98

B-Movie Bonanza

It's time to strike terror into the hearts of every good, peace-loving citizen as you go about tearing their house down

GLANCE AT THIS PAGE FOR five seconds and if you get an unerring sense of déjà vu then you probably aren't new to videogames. Screenshots look sort of familiar, but you can't think why? Well, all will become clear when you realise that GT Interactive has faithfully reproduced the old Atari classic 'Rampage' for a whole new generation of gamers. Actually, to be fair, it's conversion of the Midway arcade game currently doing the rounds at the moment which is in turn an enhanced version of the Atari machine. Simple eh?

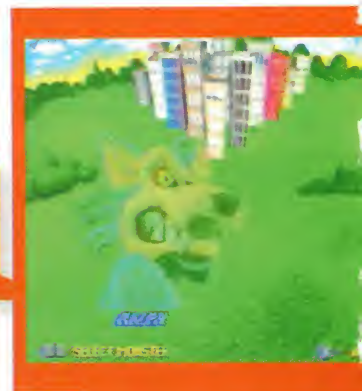
Now it's entirely possible that some of you will never have heard of Rampage, but for any of you that had an Atari ST back in the mid-eighties, this will bring those days flooding back. Yes, Rampage gives you the chance to (erm), rampage around a city as any of three B-movie style monsters, tearing down the buildings and eating the civilians in a King Kong fashion. You can even play it multi-player and have two monsters battling it out for supremacy.

Rampage is, and always has been, pure arcade fun and GT is hoping to appeal to the older games player as well as the newly intrigued. The graphics have been beefed up a little since the ST days, but that's rather obvious. Having said that, it's still evident that it's Rampage as things haven't really changed that much.

The basic aim is still to go hammering around the screen, climbing buildings and bashing them until they fall down, all the time hoping that they will reveal some goodies as you strive to complete the level.

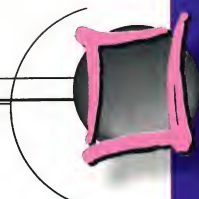
None of the original's fun seems to have been lost, but we'll wait for our review copy next month to see how it compares with today's modern crop of releases before passing a final judgement on this oldie!

The choice of three monsters doesn't really offer much except a variation in graphical style. They all have their own humorous traits and are all cute too. Which one you pick though will inevitably come down to personal preference. Just like in the good old days



No town is safe as your B-movie brigade rampages through, smashing down the local buildings and popping tasty civilians into their mouths for extra points. The aim is simple, destroy what you can as quickly as you can. Great fun for all the family!





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Seek out and destroy the 16 world wide SCUMLAB research facilities.

While chewing on the local populace is extremely good for your monster, it is always worth paying special attention to the local armed forces who will be doing their utmost to riddle your scaly skin with bullets and rockets in order to save their city. The swines!



Rampage was a massively successful Atari arcade machine in the mid-eighties that frequently had crowds around it when it first came out. Then came its conversion to the trusty old ST and the world went mad for it once again. The PlayStation version comes as a bit of a surprise, but it's good to see some retro gamers re-programming the hits of yesteryear



Not everything you find lying around will be to your benefit. Sometimes, while smashing buildings down, you may come across items that electrocute your character or send him tumbling down the building on the end of a jet of water. This could all cost you dearly by the end of the level

Game Title
Rampage World Tour
Software House
GT Interactive
Release Date
January '98

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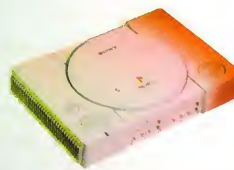
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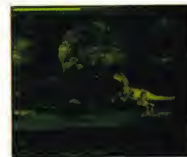
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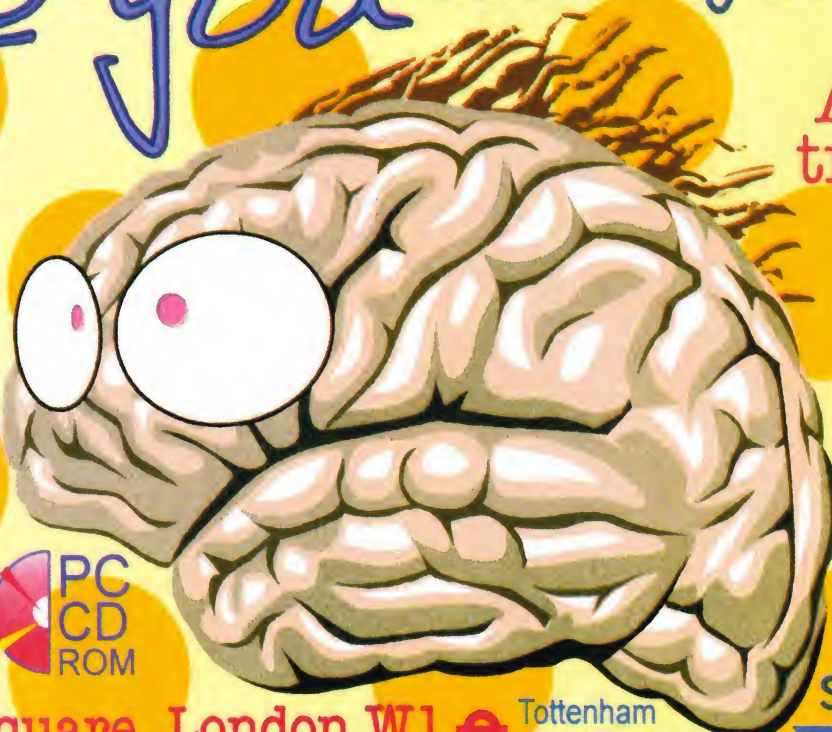
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THERAPY**

Cheat, Drink and Be Merry

Why spend hour upon hour hammering away for little or no reward? If you're a dishonest no-good cheat, you're in for a treat. If on the other hand, you're not the unscrupulous type, skip past the next few pages as there are so many handy cheats and tips, that if you were to use them, you'd let yourself down terribly. However, for the low-life cheats out there, here are some mean hints so you can spend less time playing and more time down the pub!



PANDEMONIUM 2

BMG's hottest platform hero has just arrived to mess with your eyes. These codes should help you o your way.

OMBCDBIB
AFABBJAE
FIAGGBI
IFAJIJB
NKECHDBB
LGBBJKE
GHCEOFDA
OCECGGJJ
MGFCGGCB
LCBFJFCI
MEECGFCJ
BDAOFLJG
FJDAGLGC
BCMMFLBK
LNFBKEMM
GBDEGMDK
LHFJKIJA
FJDAGOAM
FGDAGLJE

TOTAL DRIVIN'

For some new multi player tracks and a head to head

mode on the main options screen, select the course select option. Using controller 1 tap the rhythm of Zip e dee doo da Zip e dee ay using the **R1** button. Wait a few seconds and if the code has been entered correctly you are granted access to six bonus tracks which are only usually available in four player mode. There's also a new game option if you select an A track in split screen mode you can select a head to head option where you race the circuits in opposite directions to one another.

Access All Scotland Tracks

Select the course select option from the main menu then cycle through the tracks until you find Scotland. Now use the **R1** button on controller 1 to tap out the rhythm to Scotland the Brave. If you're unsure as to what this is it's the music being played by the piper on Scotland level 1 at the Start Line. Wait a few seconds and if you've successfully





entered the code you will hear an engine roar and the words "Track complete" will appear on all the Scotland courses.

NUCLEAR STRIKE

Some codes for the much loved sequel to the much loved Soviet Strike. Blast away and take no prisoners in this damn fine shoot'em-up.

- IslandCutthroats
- PeaceCountdown
- 2nd PeacePlutonium
- DMZPusan
- FortressArmageddon
- E3 DemoLightning
- Future Strike CommercialCommercial

GEX

Enter the following codes to zip through the game in no time:

- SVZFKHGP Cemetery
- BXRFYHGP
- ZVTCYHGP
- KXVKRHGP Jungle
- CVHCSHGP
- SVKLPHGP
- CVBLPHGP
- RVTCSHGP Toonville
- XVVBHGP
- YTCHPHGP Kung Fu Land
- ZTDHPHGP
- DXVGRHGP
- GYVYRHGP Rezopolis
- PZYPRXYL Rez

FIRESTORM-THUNDERHAWK 2

Enter these codes in the password screen to make progress through the stages.

- TH2STATE
- THK4SUTQCG2Q
- D0HCS1GKG0H5A
- MCGKS1GDGOGKHJ2
- C8GGS97PSOGGPG2
- OKFGS915SSGCGTQ
- EKE448P5S0GOGH2
- VOEL4C89040GGAQ
- KCC8489T040CGKA
- E8CK4C210800GS2
- R4B444551CUGHIQ
- FBG40T11GUCHOA
- GGAK2GQH1KUOHEA

DYNASTY WARRIORS

There are ten regular characters but it's also possible to play as one of six special characters. to get to the hidden characters use the following actions.

For Zhuge Liang
Complete the game in single player mode with Zhao Yun, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei.

For Cao Cao
Complete the game in 1P battle mode with Xiahou Dun, Dian Wei and Xu Zhu.

For Lu Bu
Complete the game in 1P battle mode with Lu Xun, Taishi Ci, Zhou Yu, Diao Chan, Zhuge Liang and Cao Cao.

For Sun Shang Xiang
On the title screen enter $\leftarrow \leftarrow \uparrow \downarrow \blacktriangle \blacksquare$ L1 R1. you will hear a chime if the code has been accepted.

For Nobunga
Complete the game in 1P battle mode with Lu Bu and then on the title screen enter $\uparrow \blacktriangle \downarrow \bullet$. Once again you should hear a chime if the code has been accepted.

For Toukichii
Complete the game in 1P battle mode using Nobunga and on the title screen enter Down, Down, Right, Up, Circle, Triangle, R1, R2. This final character will be available when you hear the chime.

WARHAMMER: SHADOW OF THE HORNE RAT

C. Atkinson from York has sent in these handy hints to assist even the worst strategist gain victory.

No charge for sending troops into battle: Hold select over the

Troop Roster, Press start $\bullet \blacktriangle$
X $\blacksquare \leftarrow \rightarrow$

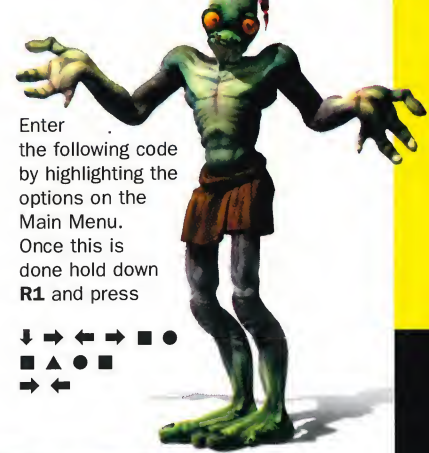
All units
hold select on the spare book. Press R1, L1, L2, R2

To prevent magic points being deducted

Hold select on the centre of the flame and press $\leftarrow \uparrow \rightarrow \downarrow$ L1 R1

ODDWORLD: ABE'S ODDYSEE

Any help will be greatly received by the many fans of this game. Here's the level select which should set you on the right path.



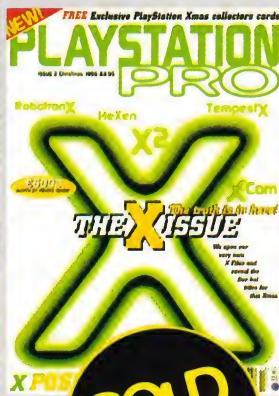
Enter the following code by highlighting the options on the Main Menu. Once this is done hold down R1 and press

- $\downarrow \rightarrow \leftarrow \rightarrow \blacksquare \bullet$
- $\blacksquare \blacktriangle \bullet \blacksquare$
- $\rightarrow \leftarrow$

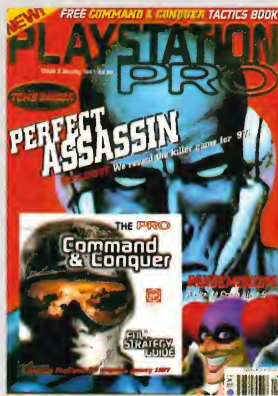




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ISSUE SIX
COVER: Total NBA '97
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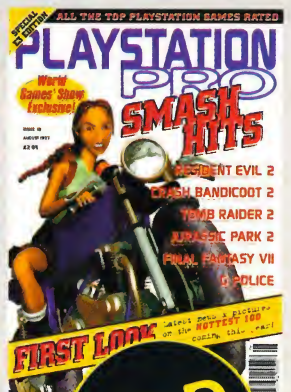
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ISSUE ELEVEN
COVER: Fighting Force
INSIDE: Apocalypse, Colony Wars, Time Crisis, Rapid Racer and Tomb Raider 2. Plus a complete guide to Broken Sword



ISSUE TWELVE
COVER: Judge Dredd
INSIDE: Parappa The Rapper, Crash Bandicoot 2, The Lost World, Jersey Devil, Shadow Master and free Platinum Range Cheats Bible



ISSUE THIRTEEN
COVER: Total Drivin'
INSIDE: Formula One '97, Nuclear Strike, Croc, Final Fantasy VII, Overboard, FIFA 97 and free Beat'em-up Cheats Bible



ISSUE FOURTEEN
COVER: C&C: Red Alert
INSIDE: Tomb Raider 2, Crash Bandicoot 2, Final Fantasy VII, G Police, MDK and free Boy Racer Bonanza Cheats Bible

Misplaced one of your old issues of the mag? Lent a copy to your mate and he won't give it back?

Mmm, it's a familiar tale, but thankfully help is at hand. For just £3.00 per issue you can obtain a brand spanking new one almost immediately. Perhaps you've only just joined our ever-growing army of PlayStation Pros and fancy beefing up your mag collection so you've got the full set? If that's the case, go ahead and take advantage of this incredible offer! The mags are limited in numbers, so it's a first-come first-served basis and, unfortunately, issues 1, 2, 4, 5 and 7 are sold out. So, to avoid missing out, send off the form on the left straight away.

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Unlike other N64 mags, N64 Pro is actually rather

HEAD

exciting to look at and read. Try out issue three yourself.

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RUSH

It's got San Francisco Rush on the cover.



Got a gaming problem you just can't solve or perhaps an aching desire for firm release dates? Well worry not, help is at hand and the solution's remarkably simple. Just send your gripes, moans, groans, queries and puzzling rants to:

IDG Media, FREEPOST (SK3038) Macclesfield SK10 4YE and we'll do our best to ease your mind. Maybe

Dear PlayStation Pro,

I would like to record my impeccable games playing skills on to video. Sadly my understanding of all things technical to do with PSX is embarrassing compared to my God-like gift on the software side of things. Since my instructions fail to tell me how this is done, I was rather hoping you could. If you do I might just send you a copy so you can see for yourself just how gifted and blessed I truly am. I look forward to your reply as I'm off to kick the shit out of Heiachi! See ya!

Anon, Somewhere

PRO:

Mmm, tricky one this. Apparently, if you connect your PlayStation directly into the VIDEO IN socket on the back of your video and hit record, it will tape your games playing prowess no probs.

Dear PlayStation Pro,

I'll just tell you a bit about myself because I feel like it okay? I'm an American who lives in a Chicago suburb and reads your magazine monthly. Unfortunately, the bookstores here get your mag about two months late, which sucks. Well I bought a copy of your August issue just last weekend and I have to admit that I bought it because of your Tomb Raider 2 coverage inside. Yeah, I'm a big TR fan, very, very big.

The sad thing is that I didn't go to the E3 in Atlanta (I'm only 14, like I can drive!). So when I read about you guys giving away those Rhona Mitra photos, I wrote this letter straight away. So here, this is my letter saying that I'm a mucky pup, now can I have the holy TR photo? Oh, I forgot, the fabled object Lara was looking for

was called the Scion. This was divided up into three pieces. Jacqueline Natla knows where the first piece is... Lara whips T Rex booty... finds first piece... whips Larson's ass... etc... etc... Lara kicks ass... Lara kills the Atlantian Natla... Lara saves the world... Lara... Lara... Lara... Lara... Tomb Raider 2 starring Lara Croft... Xian Dagger... Venice... harpoon gun... M16 rifle... Lara... Lara... Lara... Lara. Lara Croft Rules!

Albert Lin, Hlmsdale USA

PRO:

Ah, those infamous Lara Polaroids we took at E3... quite in demand you know. So much so that we still receive letters, like yours, begging us for the originals. Well here's what I've done: On my desk was a huge pile of entries for the Lara Polaroids that have been stacking up since June, so since your letter prompted me into sending the piccies out at last, you can have one. And below is a list of the other four lucky mucky pup winners...

J. Pickering, Surrey
P. Sharp, Bristol
D. Chapman, Norfolk
W. Hitchmough, Cheshire

Right, they've all gone now, so will all of you stop pleading for them! If you didn't get one, unlucky. Better luck next time.

Dear PlayStation Pro,

I am currently studying GCSE Design Technology, and for my last year I have chosen to research an area I am particularly interested in - animation. Reading issue 13 I found your feature on Broken Sword 2 very interesting, especially

the style of animation used. For my project, I am trying to gather as much information as possible so I would be very grateful if you could give me the address of Revolution Software so I can continue with my research. Thanking you in eager anticipation.

Chris Chatterton, Durham

PRO:

Sure thing Chris, you can contact Revolution Software by post at: Kings House, 12 King Street, York. YO1 1SP. Okay?

Dear PlayStation Pro,

Well done on producing the biggest and best magazine ever. I would like to ask you a few questions:

- 1) Why isn't there a driving game that features Aston Martins?
- 2) Which is best: F1 '97, V Rally or Total Drivin'?
- 3) Is Rampage World Tour looking as good as it sounds?
- 4) Why is it that we can't create our own players, player attributes and teams in PSX sports games? After all, we could do it on FIFA '96 on the Mega Drive.
- 5) What are your favourite Tim Curry films?
- 6) Shall I get The Lost World on video when it comes out because I didn't get round to seeing it at the cinema?

Adrian Moore, Peterborough

PRO:

1) There will be soon. In fact check out page 94 where you'll find an exclusive work in progress feature on Sony's stunning Gran Turismo, in which the fabled Aston Martin does appear. Are you happy now?

2) F1 '97 for technical indepthness and all round spoddiness, V Rally for the spectacular crashes and Total Drivin' for the sheer amount of selectable tracks and cars. Buy 'em all!

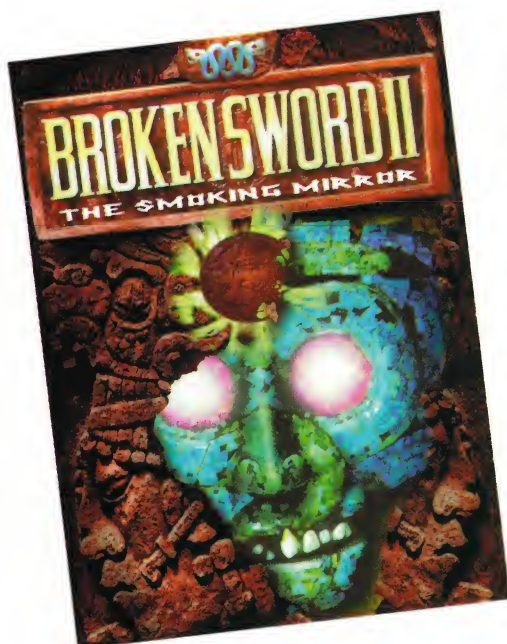
3) Check out the preview on page 108 and you can see for yourself.

4) You can. Players can be created in numerous PSX games, such as Total NBA '96, Madden '98, NHL '98 - in fact, most American sports titles seem to cater for creativity on the sports field.

5) Shut up.

6) Get in on video. That's what I'm doing.





Dear PlayStation Pro,

I am writing to congratulate you on producing a top quality magazine and I hope that you keep it that way. But I do have a concern regarding your screenshots of 'PlayStation' games. Why do you print screenshots that are obviously from the PC versions of games? I'm sure that every reader of your mag buys it to get an idea of what a game is going to be like and look like, so printing PC screenshots is misleading.

The PlayStation, although a very good machine, just doesn't match up to the graphical capabilities of a top end PC. Here's a list of stuff from issue 13 that I suspect are PC shots: Nuclear Strike (using these in a review is very misleading), Broken Sword 2 (Obvious PC shots. Why didn't you mention this in the text?), Test Drive 4 (A mixture of both PSX and PC shots. Why? Are you trying to trick us?), Wing Over (possibly most are PC shots), Actua Soccer 2 (Hmmm. Suspect), Special OPS (Are you having a laugh?), TOCA Touring Car (Now this has gone too far. The PSX shots aren't as clearly defined as the PC ones!), Conquest Earth (obvious PC shots). Why do you do this? If I'm wrong then bugger me sideways!

All I ask is please can you state clearly which

system the screenshots printed are from, because it's very disappointing to buy a game that looks nothing like the version that you printed in the mag. If my letter gets printed then I expect it to be edited right down, but please take me seriously and keep up the good work.

Lee Walker, Wrexham

PRO:

First things first: if a software house is planning on releasing a PSX title in the future, and I want the readers of PSPro to find out about it, I'll contact the relevant company and request screenshots, artwork and a copy of the game if possible. If a game is due for release, say, six months down the line, then it's very rare that the company concerned will have any decent playable code of the game. Therefore, we get sent screenshots. Admittedly, certain screenshots do creep through that are PC shots, but these are usually used in small news items, not for example, a review.

Going off your list, Nuclear Strike was a playable PAL version which we took the shots ourselves (so you're talking shit there Lee). We were given a press disc from Sony HQ for Broken Sword 2 feature (Virgin do the PC version), but most of the big pics on that article were pieces of original artwork, not screenshots. Test Drive 4 seems to be a mixture (one point for Lee), Wing Over isn't even available for the PC and those shots were taken ourselves (so again, you're spouting crap), and all the shots for Actua Soccer 2, Special OPS, TOCA Touring Car and Conquest Earth were all sent on request from the relevant software houses, so I can't say for sure which version the shots were taken from.

I can understand that seeing shots for a game that look nothing like the final version can be misleading, but we try our best to get the latest shots of the latest games, and if we request shots and receive them, we're obviously going to print them in order to keep our readers up-to-date. Previews are only meant to give you an idea of how things are going with that particular

product, not show you what the finished article is, especially as games often change dramatically during development (V Rally's 'missing' options and four player mode is one prime example).

I apologise for any misunderstanding you may have experienced, but at the end of the day, if you're buying a mag and making a purchase decision purely off looking at previews, you're missing the point completely. And you'll forgive me if I turn down your less than inviting offer to bugger you sideways.

Dear PlayStation Pro,

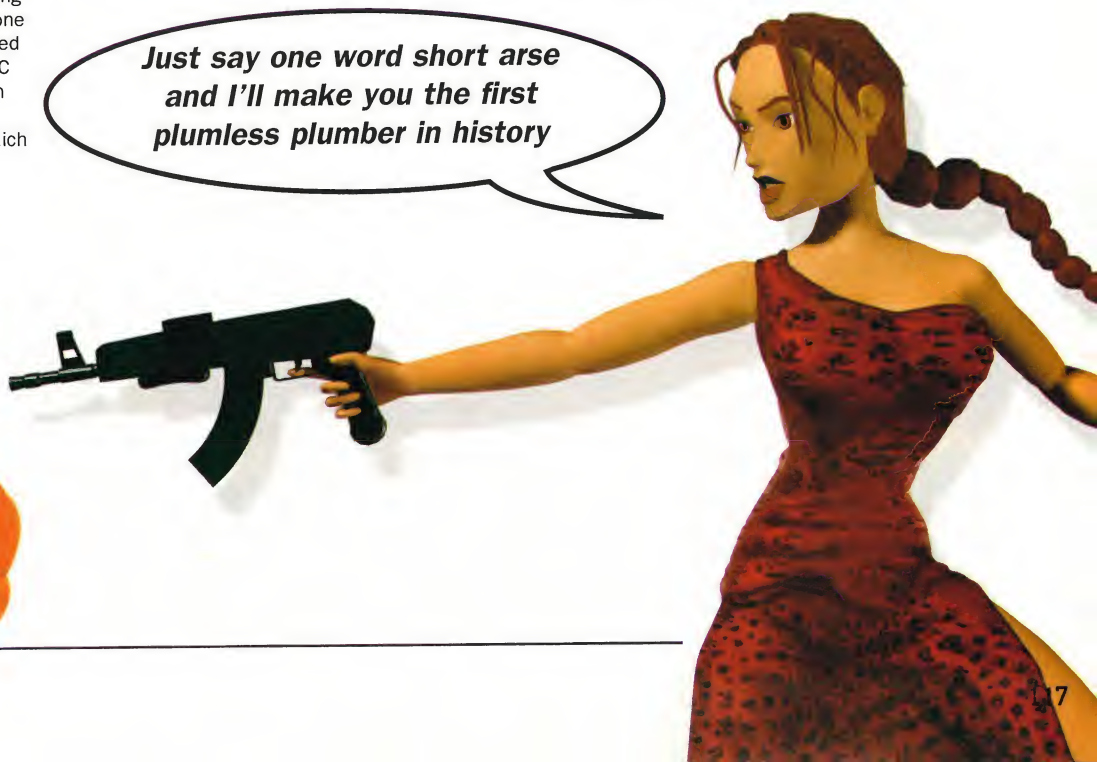
I'm writing to tell you how over-rated Mario 64 is. I know this because I had a Nintendo64 before I converted back to the PlayStation. Gamesmaster magazine gave the game 100% and it only took me three days to find all 120 stars and complete the game entirely. My opinion is that if a game gets 100% it should take me about three frigging months to complete, especially as it cost me £60! I think Tomb Raider 2 will show Mario64 up for what it is (piss easy) and Lara Croft will kick the shit out of that dorky Italian pisspot. So up yours Nintendo and get some games released you dopey dickheads! My opinion, by the way, is that your mag is top of the world!

Adam Polehonky, Telford

PRO:

You see Adam, if you go and buy other magazines you can't go complaining to me about what scores they gave what. If you believe their opinions then that's up to you, but obviously you're not too happy with the advice they've given you. Mario64 is pretty ground-breaking, but like you, I found it a tad easy. My only advice as far as N64 stuff goes is - don't believe the hype! Half of the games available for it are complete arse, and yes, Lara will kick Mario's big fat pasta-filled butt. Stick with PlayStation Adam, you've got more choice, more software and there's loads more on the way. And as you've mentioned, Lara makes her return this month too!

Just say one word short arse
and I'll make you the first
plumless plumber in history



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So what are you waiting for... Christmas

Alright gaffer, count me in. Forget £15 million pounds for Alan Shearer, the bargain of the year must be £19.50 signing-on-fee for 13 issues of PlayStation PRO. At £1.50 an issue you always get good purchase.

Oh yeah, don't forget to enter me into the free prize draw for one of the 25 copies of Actual Soccer 2, or else!

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by Christopher Wood, Stockton-On-Tees

Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo



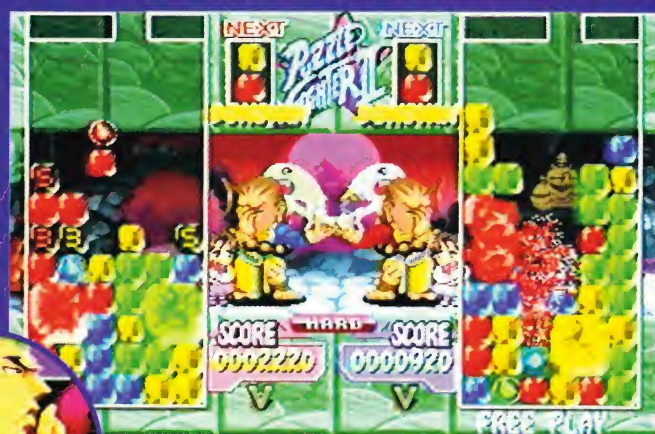
I sent off for my copy of Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo on Friday and it turned up on my doorstep on Saturday morning. Spooky, but that was just the beginning. I rolled out of bed Saturday afternoon and stuck in my new game. I wasn't overly impressed to begin with, but then strange things started to happen. I wanted to stop playing the game, but I couldn't. The game was controlling me and rewarding my brain with flashing lights, colours and strange Japanese type noises which hypnotised me. Luckily my mates came round and dragged me away from the game. I thought I'd escaped its evil spell, but no, the game's powers were stronger than I'd thought.

That night I went to bed and the instant my eyelids closed the game's influence began to take over once again. Coloured blocks fell from the top of my brain to the bottom of my eyelids. These patterns of coloured blocks were accompanied by strange noises and slowly but surely, they proceeded to turn my brain to mush. I had no idea as to how I could escape the game's spell. I jumped out of bed and stuck on Tekken 2 as I thought if I played it for a while it might neutralise the spell of Puzzle Fighter. After playing with Jun and Nina and Anna for about half an hour, I went back to bed. Initially things went well, I was having pleasant dreams about Nina and Jun (fighting, nothing naughty!) and then the background was hit by the Puzzle Fighter spell - it was raining blocks of red, yellow, blue and green, those strange Japanese sounds entered my dream - I got the worst nights sleep ever.

I've only had my PlayStation about two months and only have a few games. Whilst I enjoy playing my games (wipEout2097, Tekken 2, MM V3 and Resident Evil) there is only one game that makes me play, and that's Puzzle Fighter. I'd give this game top marks as it really is an excellent game. But believe me, it has a more sinister side.



Opinions vary, it's all part of this thing we call life. As such, one man's taste in pie is often different from the next. If you think our word is trash or scripture, let us know, and we'll tell the world that you know best



GRAPHICS: 9

SOUND: 8

GAMEPLAY: 9

OVERALL:

9

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PRO DIRECTORY

Updated each month this section now includes our recommendations as well as the most comprehensive list of releases for your PlayStation. All Platinum releases are also highlighted and updated as and when they're released. So if you can't make your buying decisions from this list of games and scores then you're beyond help.

RACING

Put your foot down and avoid those corners! Yes, it's that popular genre that seems to double in size as each month goes by. Full on driving action ahoj!

ANDRETTI RACING

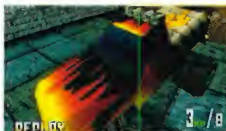
7.5



Mario gets in on the PlayStation scene, but not in the form of the fat Italian bloke. This isn't a classic but it's worth a look

BURNING ROAD

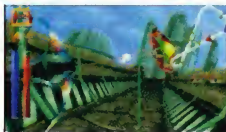
8



A fast paced racer which never performed as well as it should. Check out its improved sequel below, Explosive Racing

CYBER SPEED

5



A dreadful racer where your craft is attached to a wire and you spend hours throwing the joystick around in disgust. Avoid!

DESTRUCTION DERBY

PLATINUM

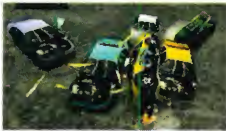
7



When the PlayStation was launched this ruled the roost. Today it looks dated and shoddy, but it's worth £20

DESTRUCTION DERBY 2

8



This is what the original should have been - A much improved drive with fancier graphics and gameplay to boot. Buy it!

EXPLOSIVE RACING

8



Burning Road was cool enough, but this sequel manages to address the original's minor problems and plays better too

FORMULA ONE

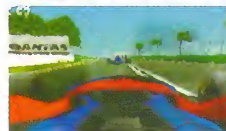
9



Grand Prix racing as it should be, tons of action and speed a plenty. But it's now time to check out F1 '97

FORMULA ONE '97

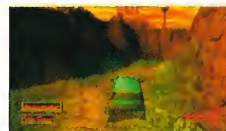
9



If F1 is comparable to the Arrows team, then this year's release is a Williams. Truly awesome stuff once again

HARDCORE 4X4

7



Ever wondered why people drive their trucks around in the dirt? Neither have we, but this title offers just that

HI-OCTANE

7



This could have been so good, but at the end of the day it was let down with poor graphics and even worse gameplay

IMPACT RACING

8



More thrills and spills in yet another fast paced racer. But even speed addicts will notice the flaws. Worth a look

JET RIDER

5



Awful jet ski racer that promised to be Sony's answer to Wave Race64. Of course, it wasn't and we hate it

KART DUEL

6



A fine attempt which looked the part but lacked the all important gameplay factor needed in driving games

MICRO MACHINES V3

9



Midget motor racer that everybody must own. The four player mode will have you glued to the TV for days on end

MONSTER TRUCKS

8.5



Big wheels can only mean big fun in this trucking great game. You even get to crush cars in front of a big crowd too!

MOTO RACER

7



Full on motorcycle racing. Looks reasonable and plays well, but ends up being a little too samey to be essential

MOTOR MASH

7.5



Playable and enjoyable Micro Machines clone. It doesn't quite have what it takes to topple the classic MM however

MOTOR TOON GP 2

9



A colourful, quirky and fun Mario Kart style racer that got us all excited upon its arrival. By no means a serious game

NASCAR RACING '96

7



An average racer which looks and plays much the same as Andretti Racing. Rent it for the night and then decide

NEED FOR SPEED

PLATINUM

8.5



One of the essential racing games for any discerning player, although somewhat dated against today's offerings

NEED FOR SPEED 2

8



The slightly less than impressive sequel to Need For Speed. More options, but at the expense of the gameplay it seems

OFF WORLD INTERCEPTOR

5.5



Buy this and we'll hunt you down and beat you to a bloody pulp. This is awful and must be avoided at all costs!

PENNY RACERS

3.5



Quite possibly the worst racing game to date and one that manages to make Off World Interceptor look good. Avoid!

PORSCHE CHALLENGE

8.5



The Boxster races for all its worth in this slick racer. Options include a cool two player mode for added enjoyment

RAGE RACER

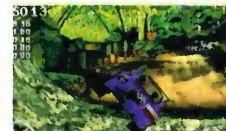
9



The third Ridge Racer game is an in-depth affair that pisses all over every driving game you care to mention

RALLY CROSS

8.5



A bouncy rally game from Sony that went head to head with the excellent VRally. It's a good laugh, but VRally offers more

RAPID RACER

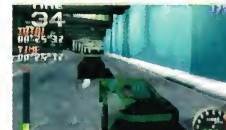
8



Powerboat racer which only differs from any other racers in the fact you are on water. Good fun for a short time

RAY TRACERS

7



Rapid chase game which is over all too soon but brings back memories of Chase HQ and the like. Just rent it!

RIDGE RACER

PLATINUM

8



The original PSX racer still takes some beating and for £20, you ain't gonna get a better driving title on your grey box

RIDGE RACER REVOLUTION

8.5



The sequel to Ridge Racer packs a mean punch, but failed to be a classic due to the limited course on offer

ROAD RAGE

4.5



A poor mans WipeOut in every sense. Why buy this when there are many bigger and better titles currently out there?

ROAD RASH



7
Average motor biker game from yesteryear that gives you the chance to knock your opponents off the road

SPEEDSTER



8
A racing game with a weird overhead view point. Original maybe, but it's still a required taste if driving's your game

STARWINDER



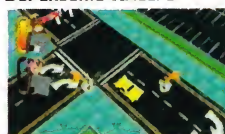
7.5
A 3D racer that fixes you to a space rail and throws you all over the place. It looks like Wipeout, but lacks its edge

STREET RACER



8
Mario Kart was an obvious influence with its development but this four player cartoon racer looks extremely dated

SUPERSONIC RACERS



6
Wacky races style romp which owed plenty to MM V3. Wait for the sequel to arrive at Xmas before purchasing

TEST DRIVE OFF ROAD



6.5
Limited but quite enjoyable 4x4 racer giving you the chance to drive Land Rovers at high speed - just like posh people!

TOKYO HIGHWAY BATTLE



7
A Rage Racer style game where you must build your car to improve your overall racing performance. Enjoyable

TOTAL DRIVEN



9
Possibly the ultimate racing game including everything from rally cars to sand buggies. Highly recommended

V RALLY



9
Truly amazing rally sim. Over 40 tracks to race on and loads of cars and options. You simply must buy this game!

WIPEOUT PLATINUM



7
Amazing gameplay and a top soundtrack made this a winner in the PlayStation's infancy. Now quite sluggish

WIPEOUT 2097



9
Just as addictive as its predecessor but with enhanced gameplay and top tunes aplenty. Buy this game today!

PUZZLE

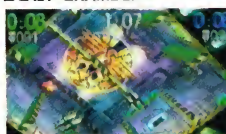
Quirky brain teasers or bizarre Japanese head-scratching affairs - the puzzling choice on the PSX may be limited, but every one available offers for everyone

3D LEMMINGS



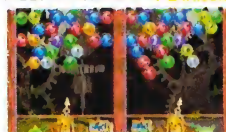
8.5
An updated and special 3D addition to the on going Lemmings family. Save the suicidal green haired fops

BLAST CHAMBER



7
Dancing On The Ceiling is taken quite literally in this frantic explosive puzzling sport from the future. Confused?

BUST A MOVE 2 PLATINUM



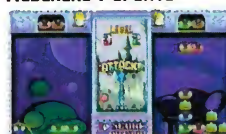
6.5
Crazy puzzler which lacks the longevity of games such as Lemmings, but it's still a playable and fun two player game

GRID RUN



7.5
Fast paced chases around a floating grid. Good fun in small doses, but the longevity simply isn't there I'm afraid

HEBERKE POPOITTO



4.5
Wacky Japanese puzzle game which owes plenty to Tetris and even more to the game's developers LSD intake methinks

KURUSHI: INTELLIGENT CUBE



7.5
Bizarre puzzler in which you capture cubes as they roll towards you. Great fun but limited by a lack of variation

LOST VIKINGS 2



8.5
A tricky puzzler where you control a posse of comedy Norse men who are lost. It'll have you hooked in seconds too

ODDWORLD: ABE'S ODDYSSEY



9
The ultimate puzzle game. It's quirky, it's fun and more than a little perplexing. A truly original game

SUPER PUZZLE FIGHTER TURBO



9
A bizarre Street Fighter/Tetris combination which will zap your social life into extinction within minutes. A must buy!

COMPILATIONS

Here we have the ancient arcade beasts brought back from the brink of extinction. Old bags of cack or classic coin-guzzlers from yesteryear? Read on to find out...

ATARI ARCADE'S GREATEST HITS



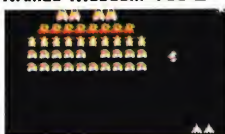
6
A rather dreary compilation of old 'classics' with an added backstage tour of the games' origins and creators

NAMCO MUSEUM VOL 1



8.5
Depending on your age, you'll either love or hate these arcade classics from the guys that gave you Tekken 2

NAMCO MUSEUM VOL 2



6.5
Unfortunately, there's very little to recommend in this second collection of old games with dodgy graphics

NAMCO MUSEUM VOL 3



5
The further into the catalogue you go the fewer classic games there are it seems. Why do they still churn these out?

NAMCO MUSEUM VOL 4



6
Another dire collection of arcade classics from the early 80's that don't play as good as you think they used to

WILLIAMS ARCADE GREATEST HITS



6
Yet another retro game compilation which surprisingly has the odd treat hidden away in its innards

RPG

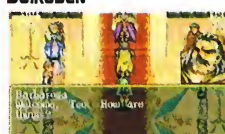
While everyone waits for the excellent Final Fantasy IV, you can waste away the hours by fiddling with games from this short selection of role playing mayhem

KING'S FIELD



8.5
Standard and graphically basic role playing romp from Sony HQ. Despite it's looks though, the gameplay is impressive

SUIKODEN



6
The first true RPG to appear on the PlayStation is unfortunately a little drab for everyone's taste. Try it

VANDAL HEARTS

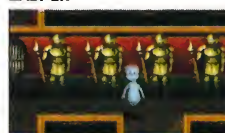


8
Magic, action, strategy and fighting. It's a corker that's for sure and until FF VII turns up, waste your time with this baby

PLATFORMS

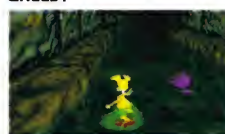
The ancient art of leaping from ledge to ledge in videogames can be perfected by using any of the following games contained in this section

CASPER



7
The friendly ghost makes his video gaming debut in this dodgy platformer aimed at the younger games player

CHEESY



6
Semi 3D platform mayhem featuring a squeaky mouse. Crash is miles better though, believe me

CRASH BANDICOOT



9.5
A classic platformer soon to be revamped in a stunning sequel. Until then, enjoy this laugh a minute adventure

CROC



8
A rival to Mario 64 only for the PlayStation. It's cute, cuddly and is in a league of its own. Maybe Jersey Devil will compete

EARTHWORM JIM 2



6.5
An unimpressive update of a SNES platform hero. But Jim's 2D PSX outing shows its age and should have been better

GEX



8
One of the best early platform games available. Bags of fun all round with a wise cracking comedy American lizard

HERCULES



8
Yet another Disney release which combines gameplay with their well known cartoon style. It's a little too simple though

JOHNNY BAZOOKATONE



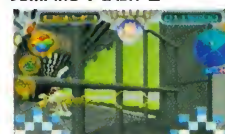
5
Johnny searches for his band mates in this dreary 3D platformer. Another one for the younger gamer out there

JUMPING FLASH



7.5
An average 3D platformer which was easily completed, yet loved by all. Well worth a look though and quite fun

JUMPING FLASH 2



8
An improvement on its predecessor with more depth and originality. But again, this is easy to complete

LOMAX IN LEMMINGLAND



7
A strange platformer featuring the lovable Lemmings. All in glorious 2D too. What a rare treat, eh?

LOST WORLD



7
Jurassic Park 2 hits the PSX and gives you five varying characters to play with, including a massive T Rex

MEGA MAN X3



5
Uninteresting platformer from the age-old Japanese super hero. This would have looked out of date on the SNES. Avoid!

MIKEY MANIA

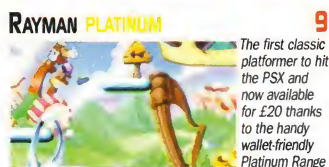


7.5
The world's most famous mouse is uninspiring in this standard platformer, but offers good old school fun

PANDEMONIUM!

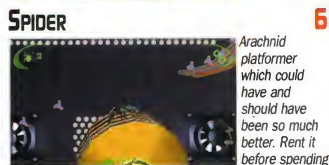


9
A 2D platformer made to look all 3D due to the PlayStation's graphic capabilities. Well worth a purchase



RAYMAN PLATINUM 9

The first classic platformer to hit the PSX and now available for £20 thanks to the handy wallet-friendly Platinum Range



SPIDER 6

Arachnid platformer which could have and should have been so much better. Rent it before spending



SPOT GOES TO HOLLYWOOD 8

Spot returns with a fine 3D platformer based on various classic movies from yesteryear. Try before you buy

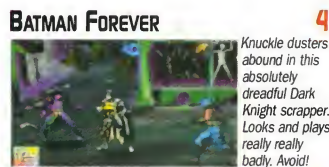


TRASH IT 6

Control a fat bloke with a big hammer and basically smash every thing in sight. Original, but quite boring and bland

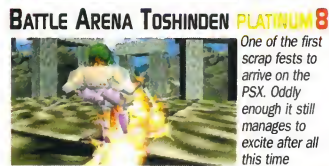
BEAT 'EM UPS

If you want to get in training for Saturday night's trip down the pub then fighting games are for you. Here's the definitive list for your PlayStation



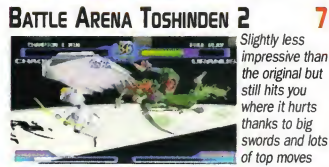
BATMAN FOREVER 4

Knuckle dusters abound in this absolutely dreadful Dark Knight scrapper. Looks and plays really really badly. Avoid!



BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN 8

One of the first scrap fests to arrive on the PSX. Oddly enough it still manages to excite after all this time



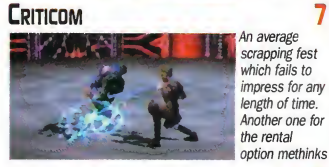
BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN 2 7

Slightly less impressive than the original but still hits you where it hurts thanks to big swords and lots of top moves



BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN 3 7

The third member of the Toshinden family gives you everything the other two games did and lots more



CRITICOM 7

An average scrapping fest which fails to impress for any length of time. Another one for the rental option methinks



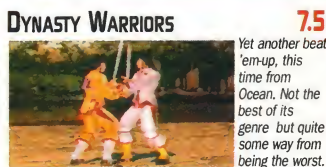
THE CROW: CITY OF ANGELS 4.5

Truly one of the worst beat 'em-ups to ever appear on any format ever. In every way a dodgy movie licence



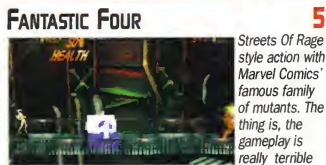
DARKSTALKERS 8

Capcom use their SF2 engine to bring these Hollywood style horror icons to life in this enjoyable 2D fighting beast



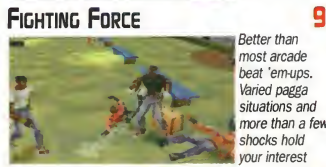
DYNASTY WARRIORS 7.5

Yet another beat 'em-up, this time from Ocean. Not the best of its genre but quite some way from being the worst.



FANTASTIC FOUR 5

Streets Of Rage style action with Marvel Comics' famous family of mutants. The thing is, the gameplay is really terrible



FIGHTING FORCE 9

Better than most arcade beat 'em-ups. Varied pagga situations and more than a few shocks hold your interest



HEAVEN'S GATE 5

A weird and frantic 3D beat 'em-up from Japan which was truly disappointing in almost every department



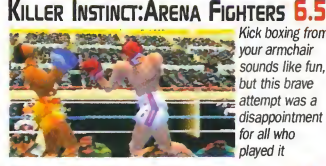
IRON & BLOOD 8

A medieval style beat 'em-up giving you Orcs, Knights and freaky little wizards to slap around a standard arena



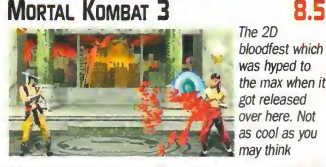
IRON MAN 3

Way down near the bottom of the pile, this comic book fighter should be avoided by anyone with any sense, or cash



KILLER INSTINCT: ARENA FIGHTERS 6.5

Kick boxing from your armchair sounds like fun, but this brave attempt was a disappointment for all who played it



MORTAL KOMBAT 3 8.5

The 2D bloodfest which was hyped to the max when it got released over here. Not as cool as you may think



MORTAL KOMBAT TRILOGY 6.5

Imagine all three of the Mortal Kombat series on one CD! Well it's now a reality, but offers nothing new



PSYCHIC FORCE 7

Fair play, this offers something a little different from the norm for beat 'em-up fans, but it's by no means great



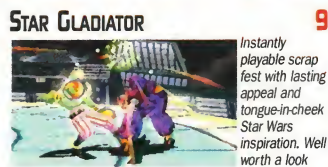
RISE 2: RESURRECTION 7.5

An improvement on the original but still lacks that killer punch needed to take it storming into everyone's game collection



SOUL BLADE 9

This remains one of the finest moments for beat 'em-up fans worldwide. Buy this or Tekken 2 and you're laughing



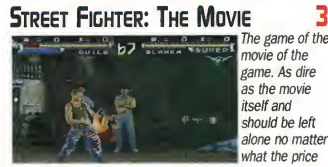
STAR GLADIATOR 9

Instantly playable scrap fest with lasting appeal and tongue-in-cheek Star Wars inspiration. Well worth a look



STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2 8

The all time classic beat 'em-up makes a welcome second appearance on the PlayStation. A classic



STREET FIGHTER: THE MOVIE 3

The game of the movie of the game. As dire as the movie itself and should be left alone no matter what the price



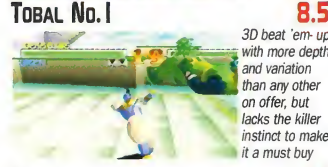
TEKKEN PLATINUM 9

Kicked its way into the homes of many a true beat 'em-up nut and is now available for a mere £20. And it still rocks!



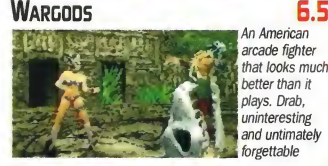
TEKKEN 2 9.5

The far superior sequel remains an essential buy for anyone who loves 3D arcade fighting. You simply must own this



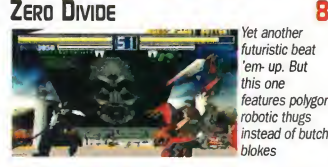
TOBAL NO. 1 8.5

3D beat 'em-up with more depth and variation than any other on offer, but lacks the killer instinct to make it a must buy



WARGODS 6.5

An American arcade fighter that looks much better than it plays. Drab, uninteresting and ultimately forgettable

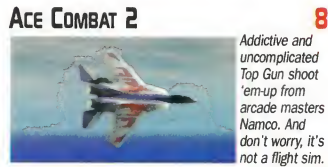


ZERO DIVIDE 8

Yet another futuristic beat 'em-up. But this one features polygon robotic thugs instead of butch blokes

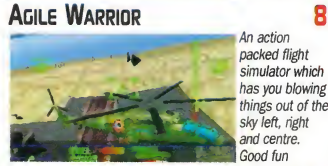
FLIGHT SIMS

Often the butt of many a cruel gag, flight sim enthusiasts are seen as geeky nobs by their few friends. The question is, are you a geeky nob?



ACE COMBAT 2 8

Addictive and uncomplicated Top Gun shoot 'em-up from arcade masters Namco. And don't worry, it's not a flight sim.



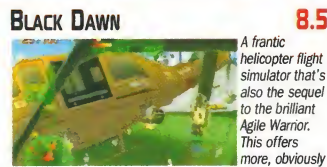
AGILE WARRIOR 8

An action packed flight simulator which has you blowing things out of the sky left, right and centre. Good fun



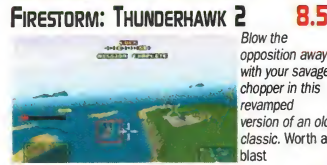
AIR COMBAT PLATINUM 7.5

So-so flight sim from the PlayStation's early days. Now available for £20 via Sony's popular Platinum Range



BLACK DAWN 8.5

A frantic helicopter flight simulator that's also the sequel to the brilliant Agile Warrior. This offers more, obviously



FIRESTORM: THUNDERHAWK 2 8.5

Blow the opposition away with your savage chopper in this revamped version of an old classic. Worth a blast



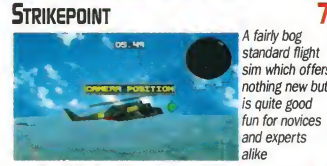
GUNSHIP 8

A more technical helicopter flight sim which although being less trigger happy, still does the business



RACING SKIES 6

The skies aren't so much raging, more mildly littered with the odd enemy. In every way average, so try before you buy



STRIKEPOINT 7

A fairly bog standard flight sim which offers nothing new but is quite good fun for novices and experts alike



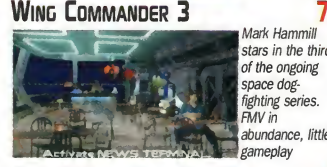
TOP GUN: FIRE AT WILL 6

No surprises as to what this pretty fine game is all about, but at the end of the day there are much better games available



WARHAWK 6

An early helicopter simulator which looks basic but manages to enthrall with its 'must finish' missions



WING COMMANDER 3 7

Mark Hammill stars in the third of the ongoing space dog-fighting series. FVM in abundance, little gameplay



WING COMMANDER 4 7

More of the same if the truth be told, with Mr Hammill showing his face again in even more FVM based tales

ADVENTURE

Legend has it that adventure games have been going longer than any other genre in the world of videogames. Choose carefully traveller from our list below



ALONE IN THE DARK 8

Haunted house adventures which looks quite odd, but still manages to do the business on the old adventure front



BLAZING DRAGONS 6

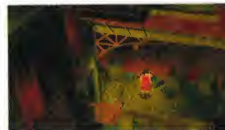
Monty Python humour abound in this average adventure that's technically aimed at the younger gaming audience

BROKEN SWORD**8.5**

The best point and click adventure on the PlayStation so far. A sequel is on the way, but buy this anyway!

CHRONICLES OF THE SWORD**3.5**

A hot contender for the worst PlayStation game ever, this King Arthur-esque adventure is simply dreadful

CITY OF THE LOST CHILDREN**8.5**

An epic adventure based on the average French arthouse movie of the same name. Well worth a look

CYBERIA**8**

A PC conversion which looks a dream but has limited appeal to those after some good solid adventuring fun. Novice friendly

D**6**

An interactive movie adventure which lacks longevity, gameplay, excitement and playability. In a word, AVOID!

DISC WORLD**7**

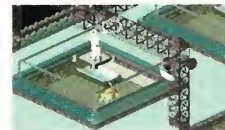
Terry Pratchett's finest moment transformed itself very well onto the PSX and this is simply amazing. A must buy!

EXCALIBUR 2255AD**8.5**

A 3D adventure which has the right mix of action and puzzles, but looks and plays too much like Tomb Raider

LEGACY OF KAIN**9**

Vampire strangeness in this huge and impressive blood sucking adventure. Well worth the money though

LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE**7**

This quirky adventure game was lovingly converted from its PC origins and manages to entertain for a short while

MYST**5**

Average static screen jobbie from years ago. It won't amaze by any means, but it still has strong puzzling elements

OVERBLOOD**8**

A futuristic adventure game which is over way too soon for the experts and sadly too boring for the novices

PERFECT WEAPON**8**

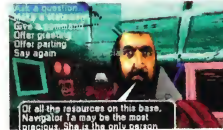
A strange adventure game which has you punching your way to victory over a series of lush and lovely environments

PSYCHIC DETECTIVE**6**

An FMV adventure game which may be too strange for some and simply too bonkers for the majority

RESIDENT EVIL**9**

The ultimate gore fest for any fan of zombie movies. Puzzles, shotguns, big snakes and blood thirsty freaks aho!

SENTIENT**8**

An adventure game which struggles for identity among the other more stronger titles currently available

SWAGMAN**8**

A spooky cartoon adventure which owes much to classic Zombies Ate My Neighbours on the SNES

TIME COMMANDO**7**

You travel through time in this 3D adventure although the effort really isn't worth bother

TOMB RAIDER**9**

This still sells by the truckload, simply because there's nothing better on offer. The sequel's on the way too!

SHOOT 'EM UPS

3D arcade blasters are a popular breed with PlayStation owners worldwide, and as you can see from the list below, there are plenty on offer to choose from

ALIEN TRILOGY PLATINUM**9**

You are officer Ripley taking on wave upon wave of slimy space critters in this top PSX version of the three classic movies

AREA 51**2**

This game doesn't exist. Oh no. Unfortunately, we're joking and it does actually exist. And it's a pile of shit

ASSAULT RIGS**6**

Amazing gameplay and a top soundtrack made this tank battler a winner in the PSX's early days. Try before you buy

BATTLE STATIONS**2**

This is basically Battleships for losers who can't be bothered getting the board game out of the loft. Please avoid!

BLAM! MACHINEHEAD**7**

3D shoot 'em-up with some nice graphical effects, but let down by over complex missions and bad handling

CONTRA: LEGACY OF WAR**6**

A 96 remix for the bland horizontal scrolling shoot 'em-up from yesteryear. Nothing special going on here

CRUSADER: NO REMORSE**7.5**

Take control of a robotic assassin in this isometric viewed PC conversion. Bullets and blood aplenty

CRYPT KILLER**5**

Truly awful conversion of the arcade game where you shoot badly drawn zombies and comedy mummies

DARK FORCES**8.5**

Star Wars meets Doom in this classic blaster. If you want to kill Stormtroopers, then this is the game for you

DESCENT**8**

Shoot 'em-up in the Doom style only you're flying around in a spaceship head first down a massive mine shaft

DESCENT 2**6**

Less than impressive sequel that offers more of the same. The thing is, we've seen it all before

DISRUPTOR**8**

A pretty marvelous and varied Doom clone giving you huge weapons and a fair bit of FMV mission briefing

DOOM**9**

The game that spawned a thousand imitators. A classic in every sense of the word. Buy this game today!

EPIDEMIC**7**

The sequel to Kileak doesn't offer anything new, but gives you more enjoyable corridor roaming fun

EXHUMED**7.5**

Slightly flawed but not too bad Doom clone set in ancient Egypt. Could have been a contender to Doom's crown

FADE TO BLACK PLATINUM**8.5**

A 3D shoot 'em-up which impresses many with the lavish graphics and exotic locations and cut sequences

FINAL DOOM**8.5**

The rather splendid sequel to the monster hit giving you more of the same, with added bonus bits of blood

FIRO & KLAWD**6**

Rather bland cartoony shoot 'em-up affair where you control a comedy cartoon cat and ape duo. Honest!

G-POLICE**8.5**

Class futuristic shoot 'em-up. Flying around mega cities and blasting the bad guys has never been so much fun

GALAXIAN 3**6.5**

Dull shoot 'em-up similar to Starblade Alpha, but not as impressive. The arcade version rocks, but this sucks

HARD BOILED**5**

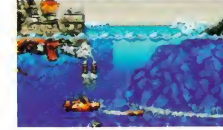
Based on the cult comicbooks of Frank Miller, this has you driving a big tool-up Chevy in futuristic settings

HEXEN**4**

Eagerly awaited drivel which at the end of the day that should have been brilliant. As it stands... just avoid it

INDEPENDENCE DAY**3.5**

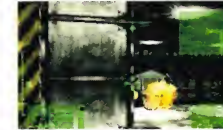
Maybe the worst movie license ever, even if we take the awful SF: The Movie into consideration. Absolute cack

IN THE HUNT**5.5**

Underwater shoot 'em-up where you piss around in badly drawn sprite-based subs. Another one to avoid

JUDGE DREDD**8**

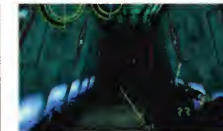
Stunning shoot 'em-up from Gremlin. The bullets will be flying and the adrenalin pumping almost immediately

KILEAK THE BLOOD**8**

By today's standards this wouldn't fare too well, but it ruled the roost in its hey day. See Epidemic, its sequel

KRAZY IVAN**8.5**

Slightly flawed 3D shooter giving you full control over huge Russian Mech robots. Worth a look if you fancy it

LIFEFORCE: TENKA**8**

Gloomy surrounds, stunning graphics and wicked gameplay make this one a winner. Buy it!

LOADED PLATINUM**8.5**

An isometric viewed shooting gore fest which isn't all that bad. And at £20 a throw you're laughing! Buy it!

LONE SOLDIER

3



A dire 3D shoot 'em-up where you're in control of a butch soldier hellbent on saving the globe from aliens. AVOID!

MACHINE HUNTER

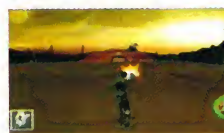
7.5



The 3D levels can be tiring in this huge game that oozes Loaded influences. The game, not the magazine

MDK

8.5



Snappy name, awesome game. Drops you in the centre of a violent world where only the strongest will survive the day

MECHWARRIOR 2

8.5



Robots blow each other away big time in this fine shoot 'em-up brilliantly converted from the PC

NANOTEK WARRIOR

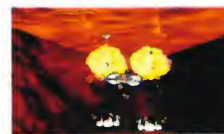
8



A psychedelic shoot 'em-up in the same vein as the old arcade classic, Tempest. Except loads better

NOVASTORM

4



An early release on the PlayStation that could have been so much more. As it stands, it's fairly dull as things go

NUCLEAR STRIKE

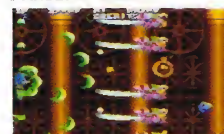
8



The eagerly awaited sequel to Soviet Strike which doesn't disappoint. More thrills and spills than previously

PARODIUS DELUXE

6.5



A conversion of the original classic Parodius game which will surprise no one but amuse many

PHILOSOMA

6.5



A shoot 'em-up incorporating many different viewpoints but with very little excitement. Look elsewhere before buying

PO'ed

7



Smack walking backsides and the like with frying pans and big sticks in this strange slant on the Doom clones

RAIDEN PROJECT

8



One of the great shoot 'em-ups to ever appear anywhere ever. If arcade style blasters are your bag, buy this today

RAPID RELOAD

5



Shoot 'em-up in the same vein as Mega Man, only better. Another early release that should have been better

RAYSTORM

6.5



A fine but standard shoot 'em-up. Not sure it warrants the £40 price tag though. Try it, you might like it

RELOADED

8.5



The sequel to the gory Loaded which was nowhere near as good as it promised to be. Still enjoyable though

REVOLUTION X

3



Oh my God! How bad is this? A crap arcade affair starting - wait for it - bloody Aerosmith! Avoid! Avoid!

ROBOTRON X

7.5



A revamped 3D version of the old arcade game gives you plenty of hours of frantic thumb blistering fun guaranteed!

SHELLSHOCK

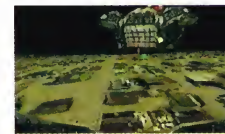
9



3D tank shoot 'em-up where combat strategy is required for you to progress with your team of tool-ed-up home boys

SHOCKWAVE

6



Kill the alien invaders before they take over the world in this shoot 'em-up that first appeared on the 3DO

SLAMSCAPE

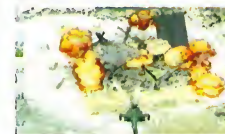
3



Truly dreadful in every sense. Futuristic shooters are ten a penny, but this is the worst game ever invented. Avoid!

SOVIET STRIKE

8



This is your chance to mow down Russians in this mega tough, but hellishly addictive helicopter romp

STARBLADE ALPHA

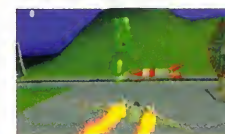
5



A substandard arcade conversion that should never have been released. Boring, boring. Avoid!

STARFIGHTER 3000

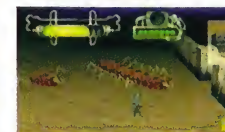
6



Another dull 3D shoot 'em-up which gives the genre nothing new, nothing interesting and nothing in the way of originality

STEEL HARBINGER

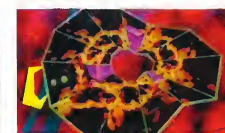
5



Never lived up to its promise. Yet another dull futuristic blaster starring some psycho yank cyber babe with big hair

TEMPEST X3

6



Three games in one still doesn't give this the edge it needed. You get the original and two new 3D versions

TIGERSHARK

4



Truly awful nautical affair in which you hammer around blasting all and sundry. The only problem is it's terribly dull

TOTAL ECLIPSE

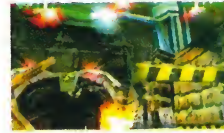
4



If the word naff was a game, then this would be it. It looks bad, plays even worse and will ultimately be forgotten by all

TUNNEL B I

7.5



Visually stunning Channel Tunnel Simulator that moves hyper fast but is generally too complex to love

TWISTED METAL

7



The original PSX road rage game was a tad disappointing for many, but certain gamers love it to bits. Try it first

TWISTED METAL 2

8



The much improved sequel to the carnage craving original that offers plenty of mayhem across the globe

VIEWPOINT

8.5



Colourful and visually attractive shoot 'em-up. Tricky to play however, but has that old school arcade feel to it

X2

8



Ultra difficult shoot 'em-up with more mayhem and weapons than most and a storming techno soundtrack too

XEVIOUS 3D/G+

4



A pointless shoot 'em-up which is absolute dross and carries the worst name in video gaming history

STRATEGY

Not so much 'put on and have a quick go', more like 'play the damn thing for weeks on end whilst destroying your social life' kinda games. Top fun though

AIV EVOLUTION GLOBAL

6.5



Sim City-esque train network builder which may be boring as hell for most, but PC owners will cream over it

ALLIED GENERAL

5



A bit like a game of computer Risk at the end of the day. Sorted if you like that kind of thing. We didn't

BEDLAM

6



Syndicate Wars of sorts for beginners. Oh, and for people who don't like games as good as Syndicate Wars too

CARNAGE HEART

8



Bizarre robot fighting goes on for a change. Robot fans should love every second of a good title

COMMAND & CONQUER

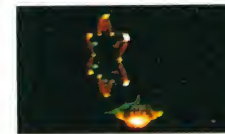
9



The classic war strategy game. Still causing players major headaches and still worth every second of your time

DARKLIGHT CONFLICT

7.5



Strategy as well as a busy trigger finger will get you through this. Stir in some patience to boot and you'll be away

DEFCON 5

6



3D affair which lacks any kind of lasting appeal for new or experienced gamers alike. Be very careful indeed

MAGIC CARPET

7.5



Mystical carpet flying. A very strange strategy/ action game. One of Bullfrog's fine early moments in gaming

PANZER GENERAL

5



More computer Risk which involves plenty of strategic planning as you might expect from this kind of thing

RETURN FIRE

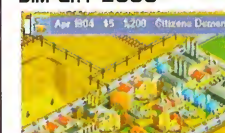
7



Strategy and action are the key points to this strange game. Try before you buy just in case you hate it

SIM CITY 2000

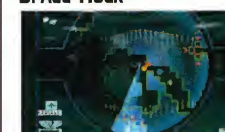
7



The ultimate in megalomania. Play is a little jerky however but if you can put up with that then you're laughing

SPACE HULK

8



Strategy fest. Takes time to suss but is worth the effort as the rewards are great in the end. Stick with it for a bit

SYNDICATE WARS

8.5



The latest strategy release everybody is craving for. Top graphics and wonderful gameplay. Just buy it

THEME PARK

7.5



Sim City-esque Alton Towers development kit. Watch out for people chucking up all over the show though

TRANSPORT TYCOON

8



The best ever train 'em-up to hit the Playstation. Build a successful infrastructure and win

WARCRAFT 2



9
A Command & Conquer style affair. A bloody fantastic strategy game that you'll simply adore after two mins!

WARHAMMER



7
Strategy in abundance in this one. Go to war with your hammer and leather those goblin scum to oblivion

WORMS PLATINUM



9
The slimy blighters star in the best multi-player game available on any format in our opinion. Get your mates in

X-COM: ENEMY UNKNOWN



8.5
The aliens have landed and need a damn good hiding in this strategy fest. Go get 'em tiger and send 'em home

X-COM: TERROR FROM THE DEEP

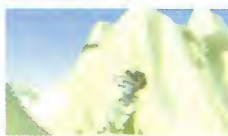


9
The sequel to Enemy Unknown which is, if anything an improvement. Best alien game to date

SPORTS

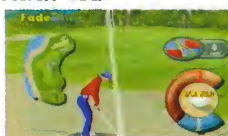
Almost every sport going has been converted to the PSX, offering plenty of awesome two player competitive fun. Darts has unfortunately been overlooked

2XTREME



4.5
Terrible, just terrible. Please don't ask me to come up with any other words or I'll be forced to say the word "shite" to you

ACTUA GOLF



8
The original golf game had a few minor faults but still did the business for the sport on the PlayStation initial

ACTUA GOLF 2



8.5
With the faults ironed out, the sequel is the best golf game available bar none. We challenge you to beat it!

ACTUA SOCCER PLATINUM



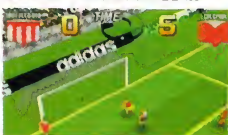
9
The first classic footy game for the PlayStation has dated a little since its arrival. Still worth a peek though

ACTUA SOCCER: CLUB EDITION



6.5
Not so much a sequel as the same game with league teams included. What more do you need Wolves fans?

ADIDAS POWER SOCCER



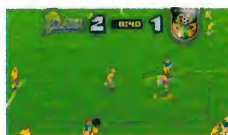
7
Predator shots alloy in this bizarre footy fest with a high profile sporty gear licence. Sporty Spice here we come

ADIDAS POWER SOCCER '97



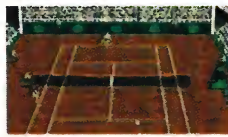
7.5
More of the same at the end of the day. Same boots, same look, same lack of Sporty Spice. Tsk!

ALL STAR SOCCER



8.5
Surprisingly enjoyable footy game which doesn't take itself too seriously. Hated by some though.

BREAK POINT



7
Unimpressive tennis game. Sort of like watching a game on Wimbledon's Court 123 or something

COOL BOARDERS



7
Ultra playable and ultra short snowboarding game. It's trendy to get rad but the game never really got there

DAVIS CUP TENNIS



8
Average attempt at the ultimate tennis experience. One day the definitive tennis game will arrive here

ESPN EXTREME SPORTS



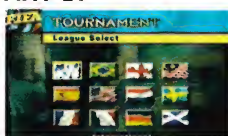
7.5
BMX racing amongst others in a truly poor sports game. Extreme Crap would be nearer the mark we think

FIFA '96 PLATINUM



7.5
A tiresome, sluggish football game with limited appeal. Even the name is out of date now. Good planning

FIFA '97



9
Definitely the best of the FIFA bunch to date. Good everything included! Footy fans check it out today. Please

GOAL STORM



7
Renamed for its official release it's an acquired taste, especially if your taste is for below average footy games

ISS DELUXE



7.5
A pretty bland footy affair which could have been better. But wasn't. So avoid it at all costs

ISS Pro



7.5
Perhaps the most overrated football game ever. Check out the N64 version for instance for how it should have been

INT. TRACK & FIELD PLATINUM



9
This remains one of the most playable and addictive games available. Still an office favourite even now

JONAH LOMU RUGBY



9
One of the most impressive sports games ever. Playable, great looking and downright accurate. Get it now

KICK OFF '97



6
Tries a little too hard to be something special but ends up being as dull as they come. Should be better

MADDEN NFL '97



9
Cracking NFL game that whips the American butts of any other attempt so far. Buy it right now or die

NAMCO EUROPEAN SOCCER



7
Unimpressive football sim and that's all you can say about it. Er, I've got some lines left...help me, please

NAMCO SMASH COURT TENNIS



9
The ultimate in tennis games to date is right here. You like tennis? Then you'll probably like this. Probably.

NBA IN THE ZONE



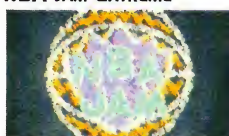
8
Good old basketball games, they're the best. Go to end, shoot, score repeat as necessary until completion

NBA IN THE ZONE 2



8.5
Yet another basketball sequel which is practically identical to the original and every other game of BB

NBA JAM EXTREME



8.5
A rather playable if uninspiring basketball sim. At least tries to be different and exciting. Almost makes it

NBA JAM TE



8.5
More of the same with slight improvements. See above for basically the same blurb. It's basketball after all isn't it

NBA LIVE '96



8
It's difficult to distinguish one basketball game from another as we keep trying to tell you. Do you ever listen?

NBA LIVE '97



8.5
Slight improvement on its predecessor. Pretty wicked in an American sport type way. Where are the girls again?

NFL GAMEDAY



9
American football game which actually rivals Madden. Doesn't beat it but rivals it which can't be bad eh?

NFL QB CLUB '96



8
The American Football bandwagon continues to bring average games like this along with it. Good eh?

NHL '97



8
Another average ice hockey game. What is it about American sports that inspire such samey games all the time?

NHL 98



9
Fantastic ice hockey game from the EA Sports stable. A contender for the best ice hockey game for your PlayStation

NHL FACEOFF



9
Fantastic ice hockey game that really stands out from the crowd. A great achievement in the end

NHL FACEOFF '97



7
The not so good sequel to the best ice hockey game available. Should have been much, much better than this

NHL POWERPLAY HOCKEY



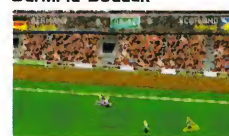
8
Fine ice hockey game that never quite makes it to great heights but has a damn good try before falling flat after a fine attempt

OLYMPIC GAMES



7
Take part in your very own Olympics in this rather splendid release. Not Sydney but you can't have everything

OLYMPIC SOCCER



9
In short this has got just about the lot except for real player names. Top footy fest though. Don't knock it

ONSIDE SOCCER



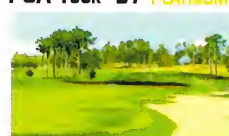
8
Yet another reasonable football game that gives it a go but loses in the last minute to a dodgy ref decision!

PGA TOUR '96



8
Disappointing golf game which we'd expected a lot more of. Fun for a while but fades away quite quickly after that

PGA TOUR '97 PLATINUM



7
The updated version still lacked the killer drive that we've come to expect from the likes of EA Sports games

PLAYER MANAGER



7
Unimpressive and flawed attempt at footie management. Still a rarity on the Playstation though

P M Pro Wrestling 8



A better than average wrestling fest which isn't saying that much really is it. Ah well. Can't have it all

SAMPRAS EXT. TENNIS 8



Second only to Smash Court Tennis with a big name licence to boot. Good stuff all round. You'll like it, trust us

SLAM 'N' JAM '96 8



Another fine attempt to bring basketball onto the PlayStation. Not that different from the others though really

SOCCER '97 9



Updated version of Olympic Soccer with league teams. A fine moment for football games on the machine. Go for it

SPACE JAM 6



Movie license shenanigans which combine basketball and cartoons. Crap so avoid it, unless you don't listen!

STRIKER '96 7



The first football game to impress. Dated by today's standards. A bit repetitive too. Let's be careful out there

TENNIS ARENA 8



Is it any good, or is it not? This is the argument which has been raging for weeks now. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder indeed

TEN PIN ALLEY 4.5



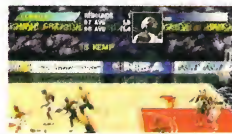
Bowling from your armchair doesn't sound like much fun. And it isn't. At all. In any way shape or form. Honestly

TOTAL NBA '96 8



Perhaps basketball's finest moment until its inevitable sequel which is underneath here!

TOTAL NBA '97 9



Taking the original one step further. An absolute slam dunker. If that's what you like of course! Each to their own

V TENNIS 6



Be your own Agassi in this substandard tennis affair. I suppose it would be your own V Agassi as well. Hmm.

VICTORY BOXING 8.5



More than a beat 'em-up this actually requires you to build up your boxer to take on the big time pros

VIRTUAL GOLF 7.5



Slightly dreary golf sim. But then, show me a golf sim that isn't and I'll call you a big smelly liar. I'll do that anyway

VIRTUAL POOL 6



The only true pool simulator available. It's not much cop though but you can't have everything all the time

VR BASEBALL 8



Home Run Derby and stunning graphics are the recommendation points to this bat and ball game

WCW VS THE WORLD 8



You know what to expect when you play these things. This is better than most but does that tell the full story?

WWF IN YOUR HOUSE 5.5



Or not as the case may be. If so, then Get out before I call the police you freak! Or is it the World Wildlife Fund IYH??

WWF WRESTLEMANIA 8.5



More of the same only slightly better than most in a fiddly button type way. Try before you buy is the deal here

WORLD CUP GOLF 5



Totally dreadful golfing game. Went back from whence it came which stank a bit. Sort it out lads and don't do it again

MISC

Those games that don't seem to sit in any particular genre wind up being dumped in our miscellaneous section. Why? Because they do. Okay?

AQUANAUT'S HOLIDAY 2.5



Jacques Cousteau simulator. Build reefs and speak to fish. Great if you like the worst game of all time!

BALL BLAZER CHAMPIONS 6.5



3D futuristic sports contest which isn't much cop if we're being honest with each other. And we are

CHESSMASTER 3D 4.5



A shabby affair which will never compete with the real thing for grand excitement and tension (is that too sarcastic?)

DIE HARD TRILOGY 9



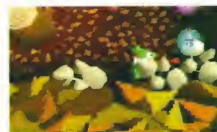
Thrills and spills from start to finish in this varied movie caper. A great game well worth your attention and cash

EXTREME PINBALL 3.5



Flipping heck, this is dreadful pinball nonsense of the worst kind. Snap your disc up, or something

FROGGER 7.5



The eighties hero has returned in a totally revamped release which surpassed all expectations. Cute and cuddly

OVERBOARD 6



A bold attempt at something a little different. It just doesn't quite reach the mark. Fun in short bursts or multi-player

PITBALL 8



Futuristic sports game which is actually rather good in a rather futuristic sports game type way. Honest! Believe us please

PARAPPA THE RAPPER 9



The most original game on the PlayStation to date. You've never seen anything like this before

PRO PINBALL: THE WEB 8



A fantastic pinball sim that will have your flippers flipping until the cows come home. Whenever that is these days

REBEL ASSAULT 2 7.5



Looks like a dream but can be completed in the time it takes to fart. Depends how much curry you've had I guess

RIOT 6



Drab futuristic sports game. Has no lasting appeal or even short term appeal for that matter. Avoid at all costs

ROSCO McQUEEN 8



Firefighting in the Towering Inferno whilst battling a range of robots in this enjoyable dousing fest from Sony

TILT! 8



Surprisingly enjoyable pinball game which in itself is unusual. Good clean fun for all the family and their family too

TRUE PINBALL PLATINUM 9



Another in the long line of pinball games. Better than most but that's not saying that much though really

PLAYSTATION PRO

Now that you can see for yourself the mountains of games released so far for the PlayStation, complete with their Pro scores, you should need little help in finding a classic addition to your collection.

However, since you're spoilt for choice we've compiled 15 games which any self respecting PlayStation owner should be flogged for if you don't own them. If these don't take your fancy then there's obviously plenty of air blowing through your skull

Tomb Raider ✓
Resident Evil ✓
WipEout 2097 ✓
Destruction Derby 2 ✓
F1 '97 ✓
Micro Machines ✓
Tekken 2 ✓
Soul Blade ✓
V Rally ✓
Alien Trilogy ✓
International Track & Field ✓
Crash Bandicoot ✓
Worms ✓
Die Hard Trilogy ✓
Pandemonium ✓
Command & Conquer ✓
Total Drivin ✓
Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee ✓
Final Doom ✓
Dark Forces ✓





CRAZY CROC COMPO



AS MOST OF YOU WILL know by now, Fox Interactive's platform treat 'Croc' is riding high in the charts. So to celebrate this glorious event, we've teamed up with the guys and gals at Fox to give you, our wonderful readers, the chance of 'snapping' up some serious Croc merchandise. All you have to do is read the croc-related question below and send your correct answers off to our usual address, and if you're the lucky blighter who gets pulled from our crocodile shoes first, you'll be walking away with the following: a copy of game (Croc, that is), an awesome Croc baseball jacket (worth £150), a Croc rucksack (worth about £50), a superb Croc T-shirt, a Croc winter woolley hat, a pair of sexy Croc boxer shorts, a bizarre expandable Croc T-shirt, plus a funky little Croc key-ring. Not bad, eh?

Failing that, if you're one of the next 10 lucky readers to be plucked from the pile you'll receive a Croc T-shirt, woolley hat, a pair of boxer shorts, an expandable T-shirt and a key-ring. How's about that then? Pretty bloody good, huh? So send your entry off to us and make sure you mark your envelope "CRAZY CROC COMPO." Good luck!

QUESTION?

One of the world's largest real-life croc populations can be found at the Grumeti River. But where the hell's that then?

- A) Tanzania, Africa
- B) Tampa Bay, Florida
- C) Gorton, Manchester

Answer: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

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Send Entries to:

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 Macclesfield, SK10 4NP



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We review the coolest Doom clone on the planet



BROKEN SWORD 2

Massive review of this point-and-click classic

GRAND THEFT AUTO

Dubious illegal goings-on in BMG's near-the-knuckle strategic romp

MARVEL SUPER HEROES

Capcom's comic book beat'em-up hits the review zone

FINAL FANTASY VII

Prepare yourself for an awesome player's guide to this mammoth RPG

PLUS:

TEST DRIVE 4, MORTAL KOMBAT MYTHOLOGIES, CRITICAL DEPTH, OPEN ICE, BLOODY ROAR, NBA HANGTIME, RAMPAGE WORLD TOUR, RESIDENT EVIL: DIRECTOR'S CUT



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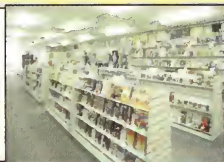
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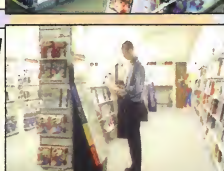


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